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A POUND OF CURE  
A STORY OF MONTE CARLO  
BY  
WILLIAM HENRY BISHOP





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## A Pound of Cure



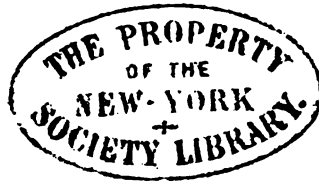
# A Pound of Cure

A Story of Monte Carlo

BY

WILLIAM HENRY BISHOP

AUTHOR OF "DETMOLD," "THE HOUSE OF A MERCHANT  
PRINCE," "A HOUSE-HUNTER IN EUROPE"



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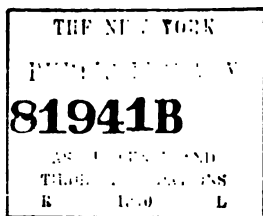
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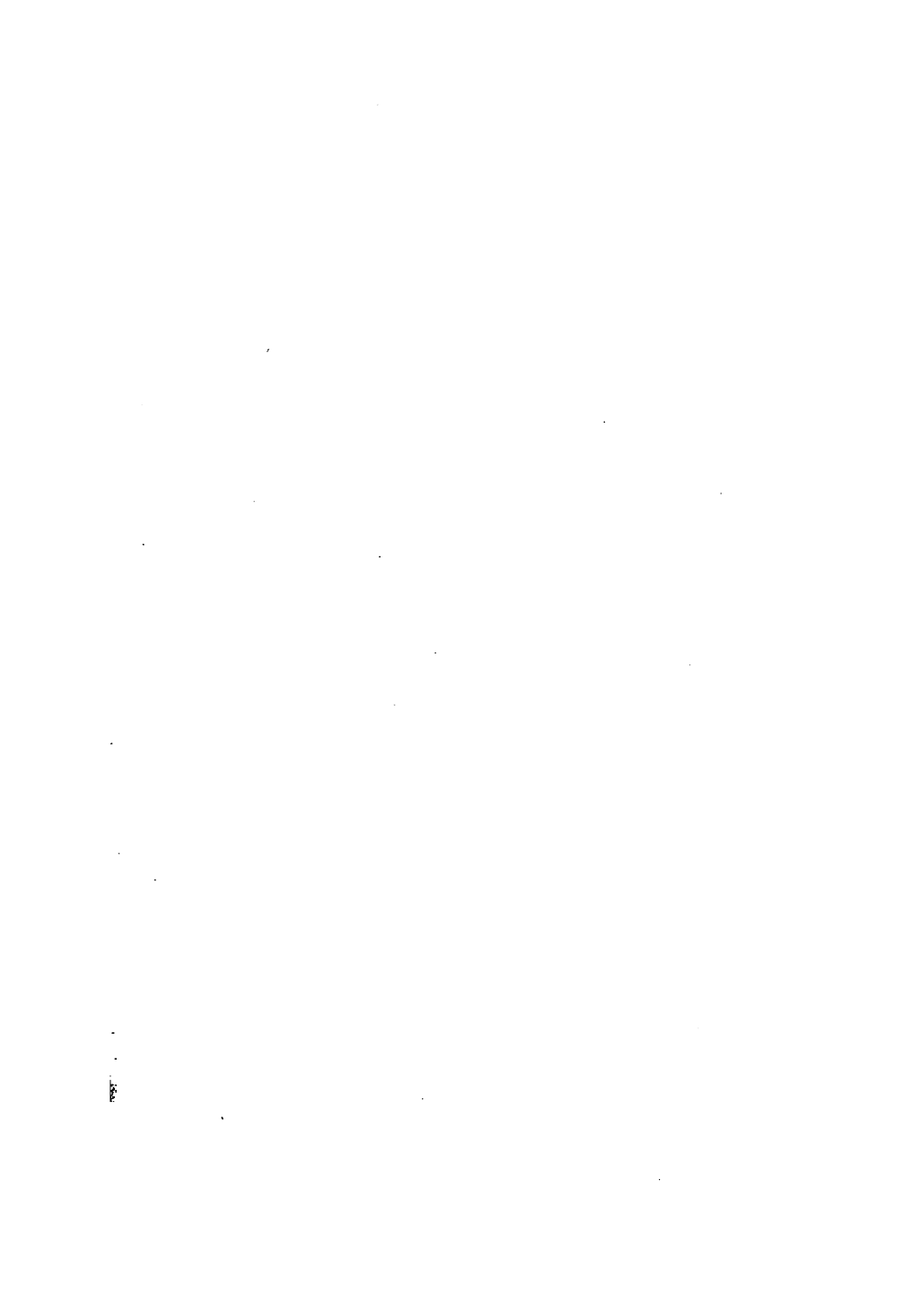
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NEW YORK

*To My Dear Little Children,*  
DUQUESNE BISHOP and JULIAN BISHOP,  
*I Dedicate this Story.*

*Considering how soon we are forgotten, it is the  
shrewd design of these words, apart from the  
true affection that is in them, to prolong a little,  
at least with the small audience named, the  
memory of the book and of him who wrote it.*

*Yale University, New Haven.*

*June, 1894.*



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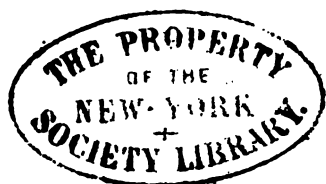
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## A POUND OF CURE

### CHAPTER I.

#### VILLA SOLEIL

MIRIAM BOND, the young mistress of the half-stately, half-rural-looking Villa Soleil, at Villefranche-sur-mer—Mrs. Leonard Lawrence Bond, in a charming pink gown, was watching, on her terrace, for her friends, the Skelmers, to come to breakfast. And presently they came.

They were a youngish couple, thin and spare, both very well dressed, and Fanny Skelmer, the wife, at least when she smiled, was a very nice, agreeable-looking person.

Skelmer dropped into a rustic seat, in a corner of the terrace, pale and gasping for breath, from the fatigue of mounting the old stone stairways in the grounds; but he put this down with a smile, expressive of indomitable resolution.

“And San Remo?” inquired Miriam. “Are

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you really off on your journey to Italy the day after to-morrow?"

"We've concluded to stay over the Carnival," returned Fanny. "We're so well off here, I'm sure *I* don't want to go at all. We shall never find anything lovelier."

"We were due in Pisa on the 25th inst.," said Skelmer, grudgingly.

"Oh, yes, and I suppose in Florence on the 26th, and Perugia the 27th, and Rome the 28th, and Naples the——"

"No, not Perugia till March 2d, Rome, same day," amended her husband.

"*Newman*, why will you even *say* you want to gallop around Europe in that way? If it weren't for me, you'd have a complete breakdown and might just as well have remained in Chicago. It's the very thing the doctors ordered you to avoid."

Her husband said no more, but his defiant smile expressed plentiful contempt for the doctors.

"He doesn't know what to do with himself in Nice," the wife explained. "He can't think of a thing to do but get his hair cut and go round and read the American papers at the *Crédit Lyonnais*."

It was the midday or second breakfast. The





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table, decked out in dainty fashion, was set on a fine long walk, which, opening from one side of the terrace, vanished down an interminable perspective of olive-trees to a majestic cliff at the end.

Miriam discovered some fault with the table and called to the cook, at the same time maid-of-all-work, who came out from the rose-embowered door of her kitchen with a plate in her hand.

“Alexandrine, you’ve put on the forks and spoons all wrong again,” she said, “though I must have told you a hundred times how to set a table in civilized fashion.”

Alexandrine received the reprimand meekly and went away—more likely than not to repeat the offence at the next opportunity. Then a good-humored, peasant sort of a man came blundering up, carrying the month’s supply of red wine in a keg, on his shoulder.

“You know very well what a bother the bottling is,” Miriam said to him, severely, “but, of course, you must come just at this very time when there is not a soul to attend to you.”

He, too, took his reprimand lightly. They made no great account, they the natives, of the kind of talk they got from their eccentric patrons, who were strange sojourners in the

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land, who spoke heathenish tongues, and never by any chance a word of honest Provençale patois.

A little boy, in a fresh, simple gingham frock, now came running over the grass, chasing "Mimi," the cat, but he abandoned this occupation, and plunged into his mother's skirts. He was not much more than two years old, Lucien, the only child of the house, a dear, sturdy little fellow, with a rosy face that was quaint and winning rather than beautiful—and yet he must have been beautiful, too, for he hardly ever lacked a harvest of exaggerated compliments from the admiring peasants when he took his walks abroad. The whole group began to watch the road together. A half mile of it was visible, through the greenery, from a point where it turned a bold corner of the cliffs.

"Oh, dear! I wish 'Papa' would come, I hope he isn't going to be late," sighed Miriam. "Babies' papas don't always appreciate just how much trouble it is to get up even one of our simple little breakfasts. Not that we mind the *trouble* in the least, do we sweetheart? But we *don't* like to be delayed, and we *do* like to put our best foot foremost."

The child, only in the monosyllabic stage as

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yet, responded to her peculiar inflection with musical cooings and murmurings, like those of a ring-dove.

“Ought we to look out for him in the omnibus or in a cab?” queried Mr. Skelmer.

“Oh, the omnibus is generally good enough for us. But I really can’t tell. He was not at home last night. He said something about going to Mentone, so he may come by train from there. Or he may have returned to Nice this morning, and so be due on that side. I shall not know till I see him.”

At times the hard, white road from Nice was devoid of everything but a few thin spirals of dust, whirling idly, as if they, like the beggars, were amusing themselves while waiting for chance passers-by. But now came on some lumbering wains of hay and provisions—to pay duties at the Octroi—now a company of the foot-chasseurs of the garrison, coming back from target-practice at the Var, now a swift carriage trotting to Monte Carlo, now the heavy break for St. Jean, and again the Mayor’s handsome coupé, with the Mayor’s good wife in it, perhaps returning from a visit to some of her charity patients.

But suddenly there was a new and unlooked-for arrival. A trio of equestrians, going at a

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smart canter, turned in at the villa gate, and mounted the incline. They were a certain Miss Louise Bradbury, a French captain, her admirer, and Franklin Hazlitt, the American Consul.

Miss Bradbury's riding-habit was of a daring sort, fitting her in a way that recalled the sculpture in the great museums, but, then, riding-habits in the main probably have to be like that. The trail of it, again, swirled about her feet in a way to suggest those dangerous mermaids that charm men on to their destruction.

It was precisely this riding-habit that had occasioned the visit. Something had gone wrong with it *en route*, and the wearer assured Miriam that she had welcomed her gate as a providential refuge. When she came out of the house, after having briefly repaired damages, she asked :

“And where is my friend, L. L. B.?”  
“You don't understand such things of course”  
—to the French captain, without waiting for an answer—“and I couldn't make you, but Mr. Bond and I have exactly the same initials. He calls himself Leonard Lawrence Bond and I am Louise Leontine Bradbury. That's one source of union between us. And then we were born in the same American town, and went to the

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same high-school together. To think that *you* don't even know what a high-school *is* ! ”

“ What is L. L. B. doing nowadays ? ” she resumed, to Miriam.

“ Building our new house, chiefly. It seems as if we should never get into it. He had to make the builder a payment yesterday, and then he had to go to Mentone, but I expect him back every moment. We pay in instalments, you know, so much when the first story is up, so much when the second story is done, and so much when the roof is on. It's all a lot of bother.”

“ Oh, he had to pay his builder yesterday ? ” exclaimed Louise Bradbury. She exchanged surprised glances with her French captain, but, as if this were indiscreet, she rattled on again hastily :

“ Isn't that table out-of-doors just too lovely ? Isn't it all like a dream here ? Fancy a February day when this sort of thing can go on, and America at present probably a foot deep under the snow ! Will you just see that thicket of pink roses ! and the almond-trees blossoming down there, as if there were some kind of delicious pink fire in the orchard ! and those other roses, red and white, climbing up the orange and palm-trees, as if they grew on them !

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Aren't you going to say anything about it all, Captain? Do try to have a little animation about you, Consul."

The two men, thus stirred up, added their praises to hers. It was in truth a charming spot, a scene that well merited their eulogy. The grounds were large and a trifle neglected, which but added to their natural charm. Where it was not violets or carnations that perfumed the air, then almost every weed in the rocky crevices bore fragrance and healing. An expanse of the glossy, dark-green foliage of orange-trees, starred with golden fruit, filled most of the interval to the road. The road itself ran on, past the old harbor batteries and arsenals, past a gray Vauban citadel, to the queer, little, irregular old town of Villefranche, all up and down hill, all strange nooks and corners. And, beyond this, a glowing stretch of the bluest sea and sky, long green headlands, mountain-peaks and gorges, and great cliffs rich and mellow with color, made up one of those landscapes of the very grand school, such as Turner loved to paint.

"Speaking of almond-blossoms, don't you want to come down and see our trap a moment?" proposed Madame Miriam. "We're having it decorated with almond-blossoms en-

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tirely from our own trees—for the Battle of Flowers this afternoon, you know.”

Descending a little, they found a pretty village-cart drawn out before the stable-door. The various members of the farmer's family, including Lucien's half-gypsy maid, Barbara, were actively winding festoons of the lovely, delicate almond-blossoms around its wheels, shafts, dasher, seat, and a light canopy over the seat, together with all the harness of the little mare “Jojo,” who was to draw it. “Jojo,” herself, the pretty chestnut pony, was tied to a ring in the wall and being groomed within an inch of her life—“Jojo” was a random name evolved from baby Lucien's ineffectual efforts to pronounce the French word *cheval*.

The company professed themselves delighted with the effect. They made Miriam get up into the cart to see how well she was going to harmonize with the almond-flowers, and all predicted a certain prize for the turn-out.

“And I'll just drop a word confidentially in the ear of the President of the Committee of Fêtes,” said Hazlitt, confidentially. “He's under some little obligations to me and it may have a good effect. It can do no harm at any rate.”

“There's our true American Consul! well

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spoken!" put in Miss Bradbury, in her mocking way. "It's his duty to see that his compatriots have the best of everything, and he does it. Speak for me, too! Don't forget that I'm going to be there also."

"*Bon jour, Mademoiselle! Bon jour, Mademoiselle,*" said she, in the next breath, turning away to make ingratiating overtures to the little child, who coquettishly refused to let her play with him. "Oh, but what a perfect little porcupine she is! She won't even let me come near her."

"He's a *Monsieur*," said Mrs. Skelmer, correcting her with some gravity; and she thought as she did so that it was strange that if Miss Bradbury knew the Bonds so well as she seemed to, she should not have been aware of a fact of such leading importance as this.

"Take care! don't fall over the terrace, sweetheart," called Lucien's mother warningly.

"Oh, and that reminds me of how I calmly asked a man, at Barcelona, last month, to do that very thing for me, to throw himself over a precipice," laughed Miss Bradbury. "It was my poor Spanish, you know. I just meant to ask him to get a stone out of the mule-path, and that is what came of it."



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"And he wouldn't do it?" queried her French captain with mock meekness.

"Oh, *you*—you—well!"—But she seemed to lack the proper words to express her supreme disdain of his implied devotion, and so gave it up.

In the midst of this, Leonard Bond arrived, dismounting hastily from a cab at the gate. His brow had a careworn look, as though he had been disturbed by troubles he could not easily shake off. But he brightened somewhat at sight of the company. And he brightened altogether, in spite of himself, when his little son ran up to him and took complete possession of him.

"Papa back! Papa back!—Play wi'! play wi'!" shouted his little son, gleefully, and insisted on being tossed up on the father's shoulders and then on being put in the flower-decorated cart, and then on Jojo's back.

The equestrians were going away, but Leonard insisted, with an unreflecting hospitality, on their staying.

"You've got to breakfast somewhere," said he. "Why not let it be here? You won't have much to eat, but you'll get it over with, any way. And we'll let you off as soon as you like afterward, so we all can meet comfortably at the Battle of Flowers at three."

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"*Do stay*," urged Miriam, seconding him faintly. The relations between the pair were somewhat strained of late ; she had come to feel that almost any alternative was better than the unpleasant comments that might follow resisting any of even his most hastily struck-out projects.

The amiable Consul saw her embarrassment and endeavored to draw the others away, to breakfast with him at the "*Reserve*" at Beau-lieu.

"*I'm going to stay*," said Louise Bradbury, wilfully. "I'm not going to throw away the chance to sit down at that charming table, when it's offered me. . . Such things don't happen to one every day."

"Come on all!" cried Leonard Bond. "We'll call it a kind of pic-nic. We'll make it go, some way." And he headed a procession to the upper terrace, carrying Lucien on his back.

He called the baby "*Cuckoo*," "*Loulou*," "*Mr. Jump*," "*General Polyglot*," "*Petit Trésor*," "*Little Chicken*," "*Little Pigeon*," and many more similar pet names.

"He seems to be a whole menagerie," said Miss Bradbury.

"He's more than a whole menagerie: he's a whole Wild West show."

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The ultimate resources of the larder were drawn upon, unexpected discoveries unearthed ; and Barbara, in addition, was sent flying to the town for new provisions, which she brought back in timely season. The makeshifts to which they were put brought it about that the meal passed off in great good-humor at least.

A castle was seen, through the trees, on the hill high above them, like something out of a fairy-tale ; and, on the other side, bits of the sea showed in settings of the greenery, like windows of lapis lazuli. There were oranges scattered on the ground, blown down by the wind. These caught the eye of Miriam, and prompted her to ask :

“ By the way, did it hail last night at Mentone too ? ”

Leonard colored a trifle, noting the glance of Louise Bradbury and of the Captain fixed upon him. Perhaps he had contemplated some different kind of reply, but he returned, boldly :

“ I didn’t spend the night at Mentone ; nobody could who wasn’t obliged to. Even Cannes is bad enough in that way—No I went over to Monte Carlo. ”

“ Oh, Monte Carlo ? oh, very well. I’ll get off on an escapade, too, one of these days. ‘ *A bon trompeur, trompeur et demi.* ’ ”

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"You don't approve of Monte Carlo, I believe?" said Louise Bradbury, turning to her.

"O yes I do—that is—of course—I don't want to be peculiar," said Miriam, blushing and stammering ingenuously. "*Everybody* goes, and—and—I don't know as it is any great harm for people who can afford to lose, and—and who know when to stop."

In truth she was not a severe nor a strait-laced person, this sweet-faced Miriam. The environment of an easy-going sort with which she had been surrounded during a long course of life abroad, which dated almost from her childhood, had left her little prejudice on this and various kindred subjects except such as arose from her own personal hopes and fears.

"Better cut Monte Carlo, before it cuts you," suggested the Consul to Leonard, dryly.

"'All work and no *play*'—my boy, you know the result," returned the other.

"I wish I could give you the benefit of some of the horrible examples that come under my notice officially."

"Yes," put in Louise Bradbury, "what a pity the government doesn't send us over here some nice indiscreet sort of consul. I'm sure you could tell us beautiful scandals about Nice, if you would."

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"Have the Owlsbys been round again?" Skelmer asked.

"Yes, that's public property now. Mother and daughter were around again yesterday, to take up a collection to get out of town. They pretend they have been playing to help their bankrupt husband and father in his business. How is that for a motive?"

"Well, don't shake your gory locks at me, anyway, Consul. I'm out of it. I shall have nothing more to do with it," said Leonard.

"That's what they say when they've lost, I believe," said Miriam, trying to take the humorous tone.

"I was rather under the impression that I was twenty francs to the good," responded Leonard carelessly. "It isn't very much, but there it is. Will you do me the favor to accept it as a pocket-piece." And he took a gold coin from his pocket and tossed it upon the table, where it rolled over till it clinked against Miriam's plate and settled down by her wine-glass. But there were present two witnesses to the manner of his play the day before who had brought away a different impression of the result. Perhaps, however, those two were mistaken, and at any rate (though they could not abstain from exchanging their glances) even if he

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made some trifling errors in his statement of the case they found it no very grave offence. It was not the first time a spirited player had been driven to such subterfuge to spare his domestic circle needless annoyance or pain.

"He was certainly in funds yesterday," Louise let fall, *sotto voce*, to her French admirer. "The payment to the builder may account for it. I would very much like to know if that builder ever got his money."

It was a rather curious thing, that Leonard, though he answered her courteously like the rest, never seemed to direct any attention toward her of his own accord. She, too, modified toward him her usual sprightliness; there was a certain constraint or timidity in her manner.

"I hear your new house is getting on famously," she said to him.

"Yes, it is getting on," he replied, very civilly yet coolly.

"I hear it's an old mill or something, that you've fixed up," said Fanny Skelmer. "When are you ever going to let us see it?"

"I must manage to do that. It hasn't been in a state to—to make a favorable impression. Yes, it was an idea of my own. I found some cheap ground, some stunning parasol pines, a ravishing view, and an old stone mill over there

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just above St. Jean. The walls of the building were still good, it looked as if we could make something of it; and I guess we can."

"I don't like your idea of the old mill," said Skelmer, in his blunt way. "I'd have built a new house outright, and probably got it for less money, too."

"Well, if it hadn't been the mill, then it would have been an old round tower or an old chapel that exist over in that same district. If one isn't rich he's got to be a trifle original."

"Don't like your notion of settling down in this outlandish corner of the world, any way. Do you consider it doing the fair thing by your country as an American citizen?"

"Why, Newman!" expostulated his wife, "isn't an artist in need of inspiration? I guess you'd be sorry if Mr. Bond stopped giving us his beautiful illustrations in the books and magazines."

"Oh, as to the illustrations, they're no great matter," said Leonard, "and they could be done about as badly on one side of the ocean as the other. But isn't it about time to begin to look at ourselves in the aspect of human beings and to stop bothering over all these wretched little prejudices of frontiers and nationalities. Men are just the same every-

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where; when you really come to know them, you can hardly tell one from another."

"Hum! hum!"—began the Consul, as if preparing for action.

"Consul, I've demolished you on this subject a hundred times, and I can do it again. A man can and ought to exert his influence against the mad competition and false social striving with which the world, and especially our own country, are devoured, by entering his protest. He ought to steer absolutely clear of them. I tell you a man does right, to himself and to the human race, to live a simple life, in a charming climate, where living is cheap, and cheap living is respectable, no matter *where* it is. No, we do not propose to do America any harm, but let her keep to her own side of the water, that's all."

"Can't a man be sent home in irons for that sort of talk, Mr. Consul?" asked Skelmer.

"I'll look it up in the Consular Regulations," responded Hazlitt, "I think he can."

The signal-gun for the Battle of Flowers was fired from the "Chateau" at two o'clock, but it was three before the Bonds turned in at the Pont de Magnan entrance and made themselves a part of the delightful spectacle going



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on on the Promenade des Anglais. The pony-cart was a success from the first. Little Lucien, on the terrace of some Russian friends, with whom they were asked to dine afterward, pointed it out in an ecstasy of recognition. As it passed at a foot-pace in the long double file of decorated vehicles, murmurs and cries of admiration followed its progress.

“ Ah, *bravo la petite charette* of the almond-blossoms ! it's a love ! it's a dream ! What distinction ! what a charm of simplicity ! ” was shouted. “ *Bravo la petite Américaine !* ”—an American flag in the whip-socket indicated the nationality—“ here goes for her head ! ”

With a kind of gallant cruelty, the spectators, in the tribunes, along the way, liked to pour in their hottest fire upon the prettiest women. Miriam, with her heightened color, her dainty pink gown, her wide Leghorn hat, seemed the very heart of some greater flower formed by the embowering mass of almond-blossoms around her. She became such a target as indicated a high degree of public favor. Thus the handsome Duke of Madelon, from his mimic yacht, in white lilac and roses, resting upon a sea of corn-flowers, tossed her one of those bon-bonnière nosegays that he reserved for especial favorites. The Prince of Vistula, from his

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Russian tröika, tossed her exquisite Parma violets. Madame de Novikoff, in her chariot of the sun, made all of yellow jonquils and mimosa, and Madame de Beaumonde in her swan of white carnations—two of the chief beauties of the winter colony these—sent her languid glances, as toward one well worthy of their interest.

It was exactly the kind of triumph that Leonard liked, and, for the moment, he was proud of Miriam, proud of the success they had achieved by simple means in the midst of general flamboyance and expense. His natural kindly feelings delighted in the genial romp, like a bit of the Golden Age come back again, and his artistic sense in the fine stretch of blue sea, the long pennants streaming out from the masts, the color and fragrance of all the flowers, the fugitive lines of feminine grace. Many of the women stood up on the seats of their landaus, combating in spirited attitudes that redoubled their wonted charm. Even the plain were almost pretty with this charming exercise. The people of Nice outside the light palings, pelted one another with the nosegays that had missed fire and fallen to their lot. Now and then—pathetic note of contrast to the gayety—some poor invalid, wan and pale, looked out

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through the windows of a closed coupé upon the revels he could never otherwise share.

“Oh, *là, là !*” —from the Press Tribune—to which everybody but the unhappy members of the French press was admitted—Newman Skelmer took them both in the head with a carrom shot, directed, after the custom of many novices, with more vigor than tact. At the same time a rolling fortress, from which officers combated with schoolboy merriment, showered down playful missiles from above, while, on the other side, a chartered break full of English youths and maidens from an hotel at Cimiez, attacked with equal vigor.

Leonard had to occupy himself with his driving, and the care of the defence was chiefly in the hands of Miriam. She sheltered herself as best she could with a large India fan, and, from a pile of ammunition before her, returned the fire, with uncertain, feminine aim.

A man in livery hurried to them, with a note from Miss Bradbury and her mother, asking them to take him, the man (from their own box) as their driver, so Leonard's hands might be free for the combat. “One man is plenty for us,” Louise wrote ; “we beg and beseech you to take him.”

“How very kind, how thoughtful of her !”

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exclaimed Miriam. "Do you know, by the way, that she has the very greatest admiration for your talent, or *genius*, or whatever you call it."

Leonard took the Bradburys' man up into the rumble of their cart, since Miriam would have it so, but he shrugged his shoulders contemptuously at the admiring opinion of Louise Bradbury. He had a dreadful way of shrugging his shoulders at everything of late.

Leonard thus set free, gave up the reins and turned vigorously to pay off accumulated scores. He overthrew the Skelmers, routed a sweet, auburn-haired young English girl, and hurled laughing consternation into the ranks of an American family at the Westminster and a Spanish family at the Public Garden, all of whom had made him their especial target.

The moment came for awarding the prize banners. The Bonds had wellnigh forgotten this feature of the affair, but their modesty did not prevent their obtaining the one they so well deserved. The Grand Duke Nicholas handed it out to them in person, and added to it a smile from those stern features still showing the scars of the signal day of Plevna. Mrs. Ripland-Hoke, who had scarce recognized their existence for many months, bent graciously from her landau and said :

## *Villa Soleil*

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"Come and meet some people for tea, on our terrace, when it is over. We count on you."

"You see," said Leonard, harping upon a note he was much too fond of, and in discord with all his professed theories, "with but half a decent income we could have the world at our feet."

"Oh, Leonard, I should never have invented our way of living, but, as it has been invented, if you were only a little more contented in it, I should be entirely so."

"And if you were only a little *less* contented in it, Miriam, I should be a good deal more so."

He had a way of twitting her of late with apathy, with an insufficient appreciation of the things they gave up, or could not have. Having abandoned the world, he, the prophet, was continually beset by worldly temptations. His tastes were simple and Spartan, he said, and he disclaimed the wish for any more of the comforts and luxuries that money could buy; it was only the effect of a lack of money upon one's own character, upon a proper sense of consideration which it brings, that he regretted.

Possibly this was an argument that had at last taken him to Monte Carlo—if it be

### *A Pound of Cure*

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worth while to examine seriously any motives that take people to that great maelstrom. Though Miriam knew not all, for a man's wife is often the last person in the world to hear of such things, the visits had resulted in checking the work from which he drew his income, in making his temper uncertain and crabbed, and even in seriously crippling the small capital that was their principal resource. He had professed to himself to look upon Monte Carlo as the most feasible means of bettering his fortunes. He had said,

“A man must give destiny a chance, or how else is she going to be able to aid him?”

## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE PROMENADE DES ANGLAIS

THE excitement that covered the memory of his serious losses of the day before and unpleasant forebodings for the morrow, was still strong upon Leonard, and took him, alone, to the Ripland-Hokes. Miriam pleaded fatigue as an excuse for not going. To celebrate their taking of the prize banner, their Russian friends now meant to keep them not only for dinner, but for the theatre also and over night. Blonde little son, and his dark nurse, Barbara, were packed off in the trap; they would be much better at the Villa Soleil. Little son, in the afternoon, had tried to feed gravel with a spoon to an amiable mastiff. He was at the age when animals are more impressive than men, and he used the choicest nosegays his parents brought him from the Battle of Flowers, lovely bunches of violets, jasmine, or roses, to throw them now at mongrel dogs and notably at a poor old jaded mule, going home from its day's work.

## *A Pound of Cure*

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Leonard, smiling still at the *naïveté* of this latter incident, was entering the gate of the Ripland-Hokes when his spirits were suddenly dashed by a meeting with his builder, Barmasso.

"I saw you at the fête, M'sieu Bond," said the builder. "I said to myself, '*Mon dieu!* surely a client who can make such a beautiful appearance as that at the fête will give me my money when I ask him for it, and he knows I need it.'"

"See here, Barmasso, what's the matter with you? You've got the contract for tearing out the streets in the old town, you've got Lord Buntrock's château to do, at Beaulieu, and no end of other fat things. You don't need that money the least in the world, and—the fact is it isn't quite convenient for me, just now, to pay it."

"The more the work, the more the loss; that is the way it is," protested Barmasso plaintively. "Let us do one thing, M'sieu Bond: the last payment is long overdue, and now here is another added to it; I ought to have the money or else—stop the house."

"Oh, don't stop the house, Barmasso; keep it going, some way. Suppose we cut down the estimates a bit, eh? Couldn't you get a lot of



### *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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second-hand doors and windows for that next story? Get second-hand floors, roofs, chimneys, if you want to—anything you like, only don't stop the house."

"I don't advise that; I don't advise that, M'sieu Bond. But in the meantime—the money?"

"I'll see what I can do for you. I'm rather expecting something from America to-morrow."

The Ripland-Hokes were some Americans who had lived abroad a great many years, without ever bothering their heads in the least whether it was right or wrong to do so. They lived in luxury, tempered by a deal of artistic taste, they had an easy gift in entertaining, and seemed to find no difficulty in drawing around them all the notabilities of the day. The fine titles that continue, often in rather degenerate fashion, the great names of mediæval tradition defiled through their halls. You were apt to see in one corner a dethroned emperor, in another a dethroned royal princess, and occasionally even some of the smaller royalties who were not as yet dethroned at all.

One of the first acquaintances that Leonard Bond met there was Louise Bradbury. He listened to her congratulations in the usual light way, on the prize banner, thanked her for

## *A Pound of Cure*

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the loan of her groom and passed on. But they were presently thrown together again, pressed up into a corner, near the refreshment-buffet, with others, by the advent of a dame who was making an almost triumphal progress through the rooms on the arm of the Prefet. She was old and ugly, her mouth and chin were of an almost comic feebleness and her figure was like a flour-sack tied in the middle; yet she was said to have been, in Paris, the Egeria, as it were, of a great statesman, and in her way to have made history.

“I can never get over wondering at that famous Princess ‘Berthe,’” said Louise. “How could any woman ever have been beautiful and ended like this?”

“She never was beautiful—and that’s probably the circumstance that gave her her reputation,” responded Leonard, sententiously. “People said, ‘she has no good looks, hence she *must* be clever.’”

The conversation lapsed anew; he was civilly *distrain* and attended to the remarks of some grandmotherly Russian dowagers, close by them, who were talking of Monte Carlo. They spoke of it as of one of the most ordinary and matter-of-course features of daily life, and they knew the leading inspectors and croupiers by

### *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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their names. They regretted that Madame de Beaumonde had once more been obliged to sell her jewels and other intimate keepsakes on account of Monte Carlo, but, after all, such accidents would happen and they seemed to have nothing immeasurably shocking about them in their eyes.

"Have you noticed how the Patagonian Consul is winning ever since he was accredited to Monaco as well as Nice?" asked one. "Before that they were always losing—the whole family. *Figurez-vous!* last Monday we saw his youngest daughter win six thousand francs."

"Not possible—that slip of a thing?" enviously exclaimed a gentleman with a red rosette in his button-hole.

"We *saw* it, my sister and I."

"Do you mean to say, then, that you really think that they can favor people, and place the roulette ball in whatever compartment they choose?"

"I only know that I have heard Inspector Krieg say to one of the croupiers, 'This won't do, you are giving too many *voisins*.' [Numbers 'neighboring' to that which has last won.] We have *heard* it, my sister and I."

But, even if this group believed that there was unfair manipulation of chances at the famed

## *A Pound of Cure*

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Casino of the Prince of Monaco, it was evident that they were not the more debarred from a very sedulous attendance at it and an active participation in all its doings.

"Now, that's my idea of a nice, pleasant evening," said the dowager, sister of the last speaker, with a certain enthusiasm. "You go over there and stroll in the corridors, you listen to the concert"—she had probably never by any chance listened to the concert—"you risk your few pieces at the tables. No fuss and feathers, no dressing up, no having to entertain people you don't care a straw for; no thanks to anybody for your amusement. And, so, comfortably home to bed at midnight."

Just then somebody offered Leonard another glass of an excellent kirsch punch which he was at first politely inclined to refuse.

"Better take it," suggested Louise Bradbury, "it's the end of the bottle, and they say that that brings luck."

"Do you think I need luck?"

"I thought so yesterday, when we were so much edified by seeing you 'playing to the gallery.'"

The ice was broken, and he turned to her willingly now. She, on her side, thought, with a glow of triumph, that here at last was a

### *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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subject on which she could expect with some certainty to hold his attention.

"You don't suppose that I do that every day?" he responded, flushing a little.

"I've been here only so short a time, how should I know?"

"It may have the air of being rude, but I suspect the accident to your riding-habit this morning was a mere pretext to get out to my place and see how I stood it."

"'Have the air of being rude' is good; you are as rude as possible—though that is nothing new in your case. But how otherwise was I to see your home? You have never asked me there. I should never even have known Madame Miriam but that we met by accident at that good Consul's. Yes, I wanted to see how you lived, to know what had become of you. No matter what has happened between us, you cannot prevent my always having the greatest interest in everything you do. I hoped, too, to see something of your work, to hear what fine, original, new ideas you had in hand—— We have been so much to each other, Leonard, that we can never again drift entirely apart."

But he was freezing up. She watched him narrowly an instant and began afresh.

"There was a time when you had strong

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prejudices against Monte Carlo. I even recollect reading some article of yours to that effect. And yet you play?"

"Never—as a *writer*," with humorous emphasis.

"Oh, I see; only a little as a private individual!"

"You have no great scruples against it yourself, it appears?" said Leonard.

"Oh, yes, I have, violent ones—whenever I lose."

"Which is not often. I believe you are already quoted as the 'young American girl' who is having such extraordinary good fortune at the tables."

"Am I? I don't know—— But your bad luck has compensating features: I'm sure I ought to congratulate, instead of condoling with you."

"What do you mean?"

"'Unhappy in love, happy in play'—and the reverse. Your domestic life must be an unqualified success."

"I certainly don't win at roulette, but I scarcely think that proves that marriage is consummate felicity either," he rejoined impulsively.

Then he stopped and bit his lip, with the

### *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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vexation of one who is conscious that he has spoken in too great haste.

A painful agitation had crossed his face at hearing the famous maxim. It had been his war-cry in the late campaigns, the motto of all his unprofitable transactions at Monte Carlo. He fancied himself indeed very "unhappy in love." His marriage had been an improvident one. In respect to money matters, Miriam belonged to a family—excellent otherwise—which spent everything on itself, and would never have a farthing to bequeath to her. But worse than all, her mother, after the too common, imprudent American fashion, had entirely withheld from her any salutary training in domestic affairs—even arguing fatuously, "If she does not know how to do such things, she will never have them to do."

So Miriam, who loved her husband and child, and would have given her heart's blood in their interest, had been slow in her apprenticeship in household duties. Out of this, many causes of irritation, perhaps sometimes legitimate, had arisen for Leonard Bond. Has not somebody said that the artistic temperament is one which concerns itself most keenly over small things, at the same time that it will cheerfully let all the important interests of life go by

## *A Pound of Cure*

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the board? He wished to be aided to fly, and he was rudely dragged back to earth. And, then, the artist never ought to marry at all, and then "poverty had come in at the door and driven love out of the window." And *ceci* and *cela* and etcetera. Some such pretexts had first drawn him to Monte Carlo; the passion for play was established, and then pretexts to support it grew constantly more numerous, more cogent and embittered.

"You are willing to admit this now, to *me*?" Louise exclaimed in astonishment. "You see that I was right, that we— And so that charming Miriam——"

"Don't flatter yourself! it would have been no better with you," he interrupted bluntly; "it would have been worse. It is the fault of marriage itself, I suppose; possibly the system is all wrong."

She took her rebuff meekly, and went on. "Is there any reason why we cannot still be friends, L. L. B.? We ought to be, we must be. Oh, why did destiny so change our lives? I think of it every day. If things were only as they used to be between us, what walks we would take on this lovely Promenade des Anglais, as we used to walk on the cliffs at Narragansett, and the verandas at Manhattan Beach."



### *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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She would have recalled, in a plaintive way, many other similar memories of the past.

"Now what is all this maudlin nonsense about old friendship and the rest of it? What are you driving at, Louise?" he interrupted, even more rudely than before. "You have done me a great injury, you know it, and you know that I know it. It was *you* who broke the engagement—and it was for the best; I find no fault with that. We never loved each other, we were never congenial. Well—after all that—I gave you no cause to be my enemy, yet you have alienated some of my best friends. It was family influence you were able to command at Washington that lost me the consular appointment which would have been a god-send and a fortune to me and mine."

"I never *did*, I never *did*, Leonard—Mr. Bond—I declare to you—I assure you. I—I broke the engagement, but I never meant it to be serious; it was only a whim; I always thought you would come back. As to the rest, you imagine it all. I declare to you, Leonard——"

She repelled these charges in an over-excited, gasping way, as if struggling back in order not to be overwhelmed by their enormity—as well she might, for they were convincingly true.

## *A Pound of Cure*

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"I know of no way in which a man can revenge himself creditably upon a woman, so I content myself with merely stating these few truths," commented her lover, carelessly. "But, at least, let us have no more sentimental gush about the old times."

Her mother now came to claim her, and, with the accomplished dissimulation that is in the power of some women, Louise dismissed her air of agitation almost immediately. As she put out her hand to Leonard for farewell, there remained but the slightest trace of constraint in her easy, smiling manner.

"There's a little party from our hotel going over to breakfast at Monte Carlo to-morrow," said she. "I wish you would join us. Don't you get a day off now and then? They are all such pleasant people, and we should like it so much if you would."

"You don't understand," he replied, frigidly: "I have done with that place. What I told the Consul this morning is true: I never want to go near it again."

So they parted.

"I come here by chance and find him again—living in seclusion, it is true, but still something of a personage. This will not do; I prefer to see him completely overthrown. If he

### *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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does not belong to me I do not want him to belong to anybody." Such, if they had been recorded, would have been the tenor of Louise Bradbury's musings at this time. "I wish him to be ruined—and there is a very convenient agency of ruin here close at hand if it can only be helped along a little bit. When this ruin is complete, perhaps he may crawl back to *my* feet, in repentance. I shall see then whether I had better raise him up or merely enjoy the spectacle. I must think about it."

The dinner and the theatre-party passed off pleasantly for the Bonds and their hosts, and afterward they dropped in for a little while at the "Yellow and White Redoute," at the Jetty-Promenade, one of the pretty carnival balls in which according to custom the costumes were restricted, and for this occasion to the two colors named.

Next morning about eleven, Leonard Bond was sitting in a despondent attitude, on a bench, before one of the hotels on the Promenade des Anglais. He was so engrossed with his own thoughts for the moment, so oblivious to the whole procession of pleasure-seekers and invalids that is wont to come out and

## *A Pound of Cure*

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sun itself along the bright sea-front at that hour, that he did not remark Consul Hazlitt till the latter tapped him on the shoulder and cried :

“What’s the matter, old man? What’s up?”

“Nothing at all, quite the contrary,” I assure you ; he replied, starting.

“And Mrs. Bond, this morning? The very loveliest of women ! If there were more such, I tell you frankly there might be at least one less old bachelor consul.”

“That would be a pity. Mrs. Bond’s gone back to Villefranche in the break, I suppose. I had to stay here and call on the publisher of my latest holiday-book illustrations. He’s using some of his ill-gotten gains in travelling in Europe, and he made an appointment with me here at the hotel.”

“Studying character, eh? sketching types of all the nationalities?” here broke in a mel-low voice, and one Major Longwood, a retired English officer, a well-known figure about town, stopped, and cheerily accosted them. “Studying the pretty women, instead, though, I’ll be bound. And right you are, too ; it’s no ordinary feast of beauty here.”

“You speak feelingly, Major, and you know

### *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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your subject. Show us your present favorites, will you?" said Hazlitt.

"Take yonder dark, scarlet-lipped Madame de Gaudalupe, daughter of a South American dictator. She's an out-and-out little dictator herself, I'll warrant you. But no, no, stop! first look at the waist that's coming this way; it's a phenomenon. I really want your opinion on that shape." He led them by the arm to a better point of view, whence they respectfully watched the approach of the willowy Russian belle, Madame de Jablonsky.

"Triumph of steel over human tissue," pronounced the Consul, sceptically.

"No, do you know, I believe in that waist. I don't spend all my mornings here for nothing. If it were merely got by putting the screws on, she couldn't keep up that color and that easy, springy gait. Oh, she's a regular thorough-bred. Mr. Bond here will tell us that the Greek ideal of waists was different—So much the worse for the Greeks, I say." And he was off again on his walk.

"Well, everybody in Nice has his malady or his history," the Consul summed up, philosophically.

"I've often wondered if *his* 'history' were correct?" queried Leonard.

## *A Pound of Cure*

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"Yes, I've as good as seen the original documents. He lost a fortune of something like fifty thousand pounds at Monte Carlo, and the administration allows him about ten francs a day ever since, on condition that he keeps away. If he ever enters the Casino again he forfeits it."

"It must take a good deal of self-control to hang about so close to the scene of such an experience and yet never go to it. They say he absolutely ignores Monte Carlo."

"He neither goes there nor ever talks about it. Even Scaithwaite, the chronic system-maker, can't get a word out of him. And yet a sort of fascination holds him near the spot; he is never known to get any farther away from it than Nice."

"I'd like to see the complete Monte Carlo pension-list. It ought to be interesting."

"It would not be a very heavy one, I fancy. The poor devils who lose their all there are lucky if they get just enough to take them a little way into the country—so that they may not scatter their brains unpleasantly about the Principality."

"Heigh-ho! hard lines for old Major Longwood," sighed Leonard. "But do you know, I can never get any comfort, as one ought, out

### *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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of contemplating people worse off than myself. You never can really tell how they take things, how little, perhaps, they really feel them. Whereas in one's own case——"

"So there *was* something the matter, then?" said Hazlitt, eying him suspiciously.

"You're such a safe old party, Consul, that talking to you is a good deal like talking to one's self. I don't mind letting you know that my publisher has just been overhauling me about these last drawings of mine, telling me they're not up to my best average, and so on. He brought them along himself, instead of writing me. I suppose I'll have to do a little more work on them." Then he burst out into a strong diatribe against the universe in general, without condescending to further particulars. "Don't mind me," he concluded, "I guess it's only the late hours of the carnival, or the nervous climate. They say it *is* a nervous climate, you know. Good-by! I'm off, I've got to go to the bank."

The truth is that the publisher had rejected his whole set of elaborate drawings as unsuitable. With this he lost the quite handsome payment he had been counting upon for that day. It was to have been his chief resource too for making up the arrears to Barmasso. What to do

## *A Pound of Cure*

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now? After much cogitation, he decided that his credit with the builder must be kept good; at all hazards the new house must go on.

"Who knows? it may be our sole refuge before long, our last poor shelter from wind and weather," he muttered. "I will sell some of my foreign securities, get an advance on them, and take the money to Barmasso at once."

He had no eyes, nor ears, as he went, for the strange congeries of life moving slowly along the broad asphalt walk. Nor did he see the jagged blue peaks of the Esterels westward, nor the bold headlands and the long, green promontory of Cape Ferret eastward, nor the golden genius springing into the blue, blue sky, from the dome of the fairy Palace of the Jetée Promenade. He could almost have spoken his trouble aloud. Yet it would hardly have been safe to trust one's secrets there to any known language. Russians, Roumanians, Greeks, Italians, Corsicans, an Algerian sheik in his burnouse, a couple of officers of an American cruiser in port, followed one another and gossiped in their own tongues. And then went by the languid invalids, in their Bath-chairs, and then the eccentric types—that stout German figure with his prodigious club and bull-dog, a very caricature from "*Kladderdatsch*," and



### *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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the Englishman in his phenomenal plaids, who must have copied himself from his own presentment on the comic stage.

The flower-sellers offered Leonard their delightful bunches of violets unnoted. A woman thrust a circular into his hand. She was a well-dressed, almost motherly-looking person, and he touched his hat to her in respect. She signed herself "Baroness de Niche." He had thought she was thus braving publicity in some worthy charitable end, but, glancing over her handbill, he gave anew a weary sigh. It was ostensibly a fierce blast at Monte Carlo, calling the place a den of thieves, an echoing cavern of ruin, a fell promoter of suicides and murder. Next, it professed to have discovered an infallible method of winning at play there, so that by use of it honest people might come to their own, and the nefarious institution be destroyed. Sceptical through his experience, Leonard doubted whether even what purported to attack the great gaming-establishment was not often mere subtle advertising in disguise. He classed this with the offers of "systems" in which the daily papers abounded, and threw it down in disgust.

Occupied with the document he had not seen the efforts made by two young girls in a

## *A Pound of Cure*

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group of Americans, near one of the benches, to attract his attention. The group was discussing shopping, prices, impositions, the relative merits of hotels on the Promenade and those in sheltered parts of the town, and whether one really ought *not* to drink wine abroad—since the water appeared to be everywhere so bad—and the usual dearth of partners at the last dance at the Mediterranean Club.

“Do speak to him,” one of the girls urged the other; “you know him best.”

“I can’t run after him,” returned the second. “If Miriam, if his wife, were with him, I would, of course. How provoking that he will not even look up and give us a chance!”

Another group was more successful in detaining him. There, where the asphalt broadens to an esplanade, and the flood of sunshine is broadest too, some people had been giving money to small mountebanks with trained monkeys and poodles, and others to a fisherman on the pebbly shore, who had decorated his boat in a striking manner. A man hurried over in sprightly fashion from the Hotel des Anglais which stood just across the way and joined this group.

“Now then, are we all here? Look alive, everybody! How many cabs shall we want?”

## *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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he called. It was Mr. Scaithwaite, the indefatigable maker of systems.

"But Mr. Vancoort isn't here yet," protested Mrs. Lanfoot, a dashing-looking, hazel-eyed lady, who was either a fashionable divorcée or else so little married that Mr. Lanfoot was never in the least heard of. "We can't go without *him*. Mr. Vancoort is predicting, to-day. He has had a remarkable dream."

"Yes," said Mr. Vancoort, now arriving, an extremely bald, good-natured old boy, one of the sort who, at such resorts of leisure, are petted by the women, perhaps, in default of anything better. He smiled and blinked salutations all around. "Yes," said he, "the most remarkable thing! there was that number nine standing plainly before me, in the air, as it were, every time I dropped into a nap. I saw it four distinct times, and a fifth time——"

"We must all try it," said a stout Lady Greenock, with a heavy sort of friskiness. "We must all try it, *mustn't* we, Mr. Granby?" to a horsey-looking man, who drove the amateur coach between Nice and Cannes; "*mustn't* we, Miss Bradbury? Are you coming, Sir Peter?"

"I don't know," said her husband, a stocky, plebeian type of person, with a large irregular mouth—director in a great many companies and

## *A Pound of Cure*

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a Member of Parliament. "No, I must be lookin' round to find somebody to run over to Corsica with me. It's strange how I can't find anybody to run over to Corsica with me."

"Then *you'll surely* let us count you in," said Louise Bradbury, suddenly barring the way before Leonard Bond. "Ah, I see you've come on purpose. It's so nice of you."

Before he knew it, she had involved him in the party and introduced him to a number of people. "Help me cover my confusion," she said. "They're laughing at me because I asked Major Longwood to go. How was I to know the poor old thing had such a prejudice against Monte Carlo? It seems he spends all his time making weather observations and that sort of thing, and will never even consent to hear its name mentioned. He stopped and spoke to us, and I thought I'd just be polite and——"

"Yes, especially as men are so dreadfully scarce," put in Mrs. Lanfoot; "where *do* they secrete themselves? But to ask *him*; that was too, too innocent." And they laughed again at Miss Bradbury.

"If it were at Pau, now, it would be a very different matter. I can't be expected to know all your wretched little local traditions, at a moment's notice. But you *will* come, won't

### *On the Promenade des Anglais*

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you?" to Leonard, managing to engage him confidentially apart. "I've thought of an entirely new plan. And then I want to talk to you about what you said yesterday. There's really nothing in it. It was so surprising, it took my breath away. And, as you think I am so successful, perhaps I can lend you my luck."

"You can't lend it, and you'll have need of it all for yourself pretty soon. Nobody ever really wins. As for me, my money no sooner touches the green table than it melts away like wax."

"But people *do* win. What do you say to Lord Buntrock's hundred and seventy thousand, the other day? And the Prince of Berlingot's million? and the Knope family who make, at roulette, all the expenses of their lovely villa in Beaulieu, horses, servants and all?"

"In the first place, I don't believe it; those are newspaper fictions, to draw people in. In the next place——"

"Time!" called Mr. Scaithwaite, "no more dallying if we're going to catch that train."

"He's in a dreadful hurry to be off, to make the play his calculation calls for just now. He figures it all down to the exact moment, you know, and then, if he loses, he won't let you

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say it's the fault of his system. The system is all right; he's made some little mathematical error. *Do* come! You look tired, it will freshen you up and do you lots of good."

But Leonard Bond persisted resolutely in his refusal.

### CHAPTER III.

“WHERE A MAN’S TREASURE IS, THERE IS HIS  
HEART ALSO.”

LEONARD gave the order to sell his securities, and received a liberal part of their value as a loan. Buttoning his coat securely over the funds, he went in search of his builder. But Barmasso was not to be found at his usual haunts. He was not at his shop in the Rue de France, where he kept his stock of timber, piled up on end in a courtyard, nor was he at the scene of his demolitions in the Old Town, where light was being let into alleys that had not seen it in three hundred years and more. The foreman of the works said he had gone to Beaulieu about Lord Buntrock’s new villa, and would certainly spend the entire afternoon there. Leonard hesitated but a moment, and determined to follow him thither. His better judgment prompted him not to keep with him the large sum of money he had drawn. It would be subject to who could say what

## *A Pound of Cure*

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contingencies. No; since he had drawn it for Barmasso, he would go and disembarass himself of it without fail and without delay.

Beaulieu was the next station beyond his own, of Villefranche. As he went to take the train, he could not but wish, with a vague premonitory trouble, that both had been in a westward direction, toward Cannes, instead of on the line of Monte Carlo. In the waiting-room of the station, the very first person he set eyes on was Miriam. She came toward him, in the dark hat with plumes and the military-looking coat with capes, that she was wearing just then, a combination that set off to particular advantage her slender, graceful form, just beginning to be touched with matronly roundness. She flushed and smiled in a deprecating way on seeing him.

"No, I did *not* go home in the omnibus," she exclaimed. "You know I told you when *my* chance for an escapade came along I was going to take it. By accident I met the Skelmers, and they *insisted* on my coming to help them in their shopping, and then breakfasting with them at their hotel. And then they wanted me *so much* to go with them to Monte Carlo, as guide, so here we are. It was all just



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on the spur of the moment. They've never been there, you know. And I knew Lucien was in perfectly good hands, and——”

But Leonard, instead of being disposed to fault-finding, was positively relieved at seeing Miriam. He meant to tell her what he was going to do at Beaulieu; she would know of his having the money, would understand the seriousness of his purpose; she would be there to see that he got off at Beaulieu, and thus no temptation could ensnare him. But certain new complications—the Skelmers, then the irruption of a lot of other acquaintances who had to be spoken to—prevented this. They were all in the train presently, and he had not yet told Miriam. Then, as they were settling themselves, still more people crowded boisterously into the compartment and filled every available seat. Among these latter were two sprightly young girls, Amy Barr and Lillian Skobel, the same whom we have already seen trying to attract Leonard's attention on the Promenade. They were over for the day, from Cannes, with a hired chaperon. They joked about his abstracted manner of earlier in the day. Then said Amy :

“Is it *really* so dreadful at Monte Carlo as they say? Are there as many horrors? You

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have been over there often, of course; have you seen many suicides?"

"No, I've had rather bad luck in that line; it's tiresomely tame and respectable when I go. They say the woods are full of suicides, but they have a way of carting them off and tidying up things before anybody can get around."

He now chose to pretend that the girls had come over expressly for such dismal sights.

"If I were you," he advised, "I'd go right to the Director of the Casino, as strangers and charming ladies, and beg him to let you see a suicide or get one up for your benefit. '*Please*, Mr. Director, just one wee little suicide; it's our only opportunity.' I think he could manage it for you."

In such-like lively chatter the short distance to Villefranche passed quickly, and the distance to Beaulieu was even shorter yet. At Beaulieu, Leonard got up to alight, but some of the company thought it was only his joke, and kept the door shut against him. Then, when they found he was really serious, the handle itself stuck, the conductor had gone on up the platform and was not there to open, and, before anything could be done, the train moved on again. Leonard fell back into his corner, benumbed; he was overtaken as by a sort of

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fatality. Miriam had looked at him in surprise.

“I am so glad you are with us,” she said; “but you won’t play even a five-franc piece to-day, will you, dear?”

He did not answer, having indeed scarcely heard her. Presently she said again, “Oh, there is Eze, way up in the sky. Do you remember the day we first went there and our first walk on the Corniche Road? It was the most delightful excursion,” she explained to the others. “Oh, how hungry we were! We ate up all our picnic provisions, and then had to go to a restaurant besides. Once we got lost on the trail, descending to Monte Carlo, and thought we might have to sleep in a grotto, in the pine-grove, all night. When we got there, Leonard threw down a piece on the table and won a good deal more than our day’s expenses. I thought it very ‘cute of him at the time, for I had no objection at all to ‘spoiling the Egyptians;’ but sometimes now I wish he hadn’t. It would be better if everybody lost whenever he tried it, and especially the first time.”

They dived in and out of numerous tunnels which have caused riding on this railway to be compared to travelling in a flute and looking through the stops. They passed the rural station

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of La Turbie, Monaco, the site of the castle of what Newman Skelmer took particular pains to call the un-Principality, and in a very few minutes thereafter they got out at the bustling depot, immediately below the Casino of Monte Carlo. Instead of taking the elevator, they walked up by the broad stone staircase leading to the upper platform, getting a foretaste of the admirable prospect as they went. On the terrace was a music-stand and a little theatre for children. Over a long chevaux-de-frise of cactus and aloes, and over the stone balustrade, they saw a bit of the green semicircle of the pigeon-shooting ground, and the miniature port with its gay yachts, and the quarter of the Condamine, that is rapidly filling the interval between the two rugged headlands; and they saw the gray, ivy-grown battlements of mediæval Monaco, and the grand cliff of the Tête de Chien towering above it all, like the head indeed of a great dog, who might make but a mouthful of the place at a sign. The excessive trimness and prettiness of everything in the foreground especially struck the new-comers.

"They've got the virtue *next* to godliness, at any rate," said Skelmer, dryly. "I guess they're trying to give it the first place."

"It's probably one way of washing their

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hands of all the disagreeable things," said Leonard.

This led to more joking still about the suicides; they talked as people will who, in the midst of all so cheerful and decorous, find it hard to believe in any ghastly ideas. Leonard offered to pilot Miss Amy Barr, from Cannes, to the Director, to prefer the request he had represented them as making.

"Why won't *you* suicide for our benefit?" she replied, to punish him for his teasing; "it would save time and be such a favor. Can't you think of some nice impromptu method?"

Soldiers of His Serene Highness's miniature army, in light blue and red, trimmer and neater too than soldiers elsewhere, paced near them.

"They are going to ask us to move on," said Lillian Skobel; "they say they don't even allow people to linger about, for fear they are considering making away with themselves."

"I think they'll hardly suspect seven of us at once!" said Miriam; "that would be almost too much of a novelty."

They turned around the corner, and came at length to the real front of the Casino, which faces landward. People, already in summer costume, were lounging on the benches before it, watch-

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ing the arrivals and departures. Skelmer at once declared the famous Casino pretentious and not half so fine as it ought to be, for all the praise lavished upon it; he guaranteed that he would equal or surpass it with a good dozen of buildings in Chicago.

Still, even he could not restrain a certain feeling of deference when they were once within the lobby. It was a fine, large promenade, a sort of basilica, with polished marble columns, a gallery, and paintings all round above. And yet again—after putting away their wraps in the cloak-rooms and going through the ceremony of getting their cards of admission for the day, at the secretary's office—they could not forbear standing awhile to admire the prospect seen through the clear plate-glass of the entrance doors like a bit of delicious tapestry. The long carpet of vivid green turf in the midst of an esplanade, bordered by fine cafés, itself resembled a sort of idealized play-table. Saddled donkeys were waiting about to take people to the mountain-top. On the distant height an old Roman watch-tower showed its small spot of dark, and drew an attention to itself far out of proportion to its mass. The Roman tower had long since ceased to watch for Ligurian barbarians and Saracen pirates; it

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had now nothing better to do than look down upon the dubious pleasure-resort established below when all the rest of Europe had driven it out, and await, perhaps, the day when it might give the signal for its destruction.

The visitors had been impressed in the lobby ; when they entered the halls of play they were well-nigh awed. They saw a long vista of chambers stretching before them, florid in ornament, lofty, lighted by chandeliers all sparkling with facets of crystal. Now there reigned there only a grave daylight, coming through windows closed to views of the outer world. A reverential hush and whispering tone characterized the social intercourse. All heads were respectfully uncovered ; if a man did not remove his hat, on entering, a liveried attendant at once called his attention to the omission. It was evident that the god of chance exacted of his worshippers a punctilious observance of the proprieties.

The whereabouts of the gaming-tables — spaced at liberal intervals apart—were to be discovered by the crowds that stood around them, three and four rows deep. It was difficult even to get near enough to lose one's money. There were chairs for only a favored few. On comfortably cushioned benches about

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the sides of the room, and on divans in the centre, rested wearily some individuals, chiefly women, tired with the long standing about the amusement entailed. Above the heads of the compact crowd arose a dull click of coin, the rattle of the marbles spinning in the roulette-wheels, and the old familiar cries of the croupiers that re-echo in all the descriptions of such scenes.

“ *Faites vos jeux, messieurs !* ” and “ *Rien ne va plus.* ”

The new-comers went at once to the nearest table and began their study of *Roulette* eagerly, fixedly. It seemed so strange a sight that it was hardly possible it could last ; but if they left it, even to make a hasty general inspection of the rooms, it might cease and disappear forever. The novices regarded the smooth croupiers with wondering and indignant eyes. They found the spectators, too, peculiar, and many of them very disreputable-looking. Incautiously they talked aloud ; people looked around at them in a severe way, and they promptly lowered their voices again. The nicked roulette-wheel seemed a little shining pond or a bubbling spring in the centre of the green cloth table. The green table was marked with numbers corresponding to the compartments in the wheel,



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and with a few simple geometrical devices, brightened up with black and red.

Leonard explained to his friends the main points of the game. He showed how you could put down your five-franc piece, which was the smallest stake, so as, with good luck, to have it doubled, tripled, or increased thirty-five fold; how you could play odd or even, red or black, the first half of the numbers or the last half, the foot of the columns, or *carrés* and *transversales*. Meanwhile, the money he had brought with him was making itself felt in his pocket, with a mystic life of its own, but he was assuring himself stoically that one could come to Monte Carlo, even with a very large sum, and keep it quite intact; it was not difficult in the least.

The party drifted asunder, and the two young girls went away, with their paid chaperon, to some different table. It appeared that those two were a pair of young rogues, after all: this was not their first visit to the place; they said they had come over once before, by themselves, one rainy day, and they alleged, in laughing excuse, that there was really nothing one could do in Cannes on a rainy day. Amy Barr had brought to-day a five-franc piece which she was going to play for a certain friend, named Evelyn Moore, who had not been able to accompany

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them. She came back excitedly, in a moment, to say she had seen the well-known Owlsbys, the American mother and daughter, described by the Consul, who had so disgraced themselves at play.

"Were they *winning*?" demanded Leonard, unconsciously, more interested in the question as to whether any notable changes of luck were possibly at last on the carpet than in any aspects of the morality of the precious pair.

At other tables were yet new types and higher play. Matrons, young and old, from whom no marriage certificate could be successfully demanded, elbowed the more respectable women on equal terms; but here the most battered haridans observed all the proprieties, in the general respect and greed for gain. It was part of the conventions of the place too that the respectable women who came ignored all this; nor is it likely that protest on their part would have availed, since the patronage of the other class must have been worth much more than theirs.

Some of the old dames, from the select society at Mrs. Ripland-Hokes, were seen tucked away at corners of the tables, gaming comfortably. Some of the young beauties were there, too, as the dainty Madame d'Ourlet, of the

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complexion of lily and rose, and Madame de Jablonsky, of the incredible waist.

Fanny Skelmer marvelled especially at the old people who pursued this passion—forgetting that, like avarice, it is a passion peculiarly favored by age, one of those that survive all others. The venerable men with silvery beards and one leg at the least in the grave, she thought, should have been at home, making their wills, and the grandmotherly old ladies should have been knitting stockings at their own firesides.

“Look at the harpy clutch with which those lean hands put away the gains,” said Miriam, pointing out one of these latter. “It is a type that recalls Thackeray’s ‘Beatrice Esmond’ in her last stages.”

Literary reminiscences were, for the moment, in order: they recalled other characters that had bent over such tables as these, the names we ever think of when the subject is mooted—“Gwendolen,” “Daniel Deronda,” “Guy Livingston,” the wondrous “Guy”—who “flinched no more at a great moral law than at a big fence”—“Cynthia Waters,” and “Gerard,” of the “White Rose.”

But real players soon brought them back again from these imaginary ones. Those who

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“played to the gallery,” as the saying is, were the most entertaining, as they meant to be. Certain persons staked most recklessly it appeared for the mere pleasure of astonishing the by-standers, and squandered prodigal sums to enjoy the wonderment of a few idlers, not one of whom possibly they had ever seen before or would ever see again.

Newman Skelmer was especially scornful at this class. Presently he set to studying out the game definitely, fixed his shrewd business eyes upon it intently, to see if there were not here as elsewhere opportunity of profit for him, if there were not some way of getting the better of it, of “beating the game,” as he said. Leonard Bond lost a louis or two in showing his friends how to play, but Skelmer gathered up winnings of more than thrice the amount, and tucked them into his pocket with a complacent grin; he had not the slightest intention of recommencing.

“It’s the kind of game,” he said, “on the whole, to suit a man who would bet heavy on three kings.”

“What kind of a man bets ‘heavy on three kings?’ ” Miriam asked, more by way of making conversation than any real interest.

“Why, three kings is really no hand at all, but it’s just hand enough to fill some men’s

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heads full of big ideas. They bluff on it, and go all to pieces when the big cards come out. So this game sometimes *looks* good ; it lures a man on ; but he's got no real chance at all."

The blue Mediterranean, the lovely flower-gardens, the mountain panorama, all the world of natural healthful delights, were there without, but the curtains within were close-drawn against all these ; there must be no distractions from the absorbing business of the time and place ; scarce even a breath of the fresh outer air was admitted, to modify the heated atmosphere of play.

"See what I have won for Evelyn Moore," cried Amy Barr, returning anew, flushed and smiling, to show a considerable handful of money. She had some Wall Street blood in her veins ; perhaps it was this that made the place almost too congenial to her, and had developed her already into a most enterprising little gamester.

"And how have you come out for yourself?" inquired Leonard.

"Oh ! on my own account not quite so well. I'm about thirty francs behind."

"And yet we pretend that Monte Carlo is not a school of the virtues," continued Leonard, ironically. "Where else would you find

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an opportunity for a high moral action like this? Might not Amy's five-franc piece have easily become so mixed up with Evelyn's, and Evelyn's with Amy's, that it would have taken the finest kind of casuistry to say which was played first or at any given time? In the outer world, most likely there would have been such confusion, and Miss Barr would have made a much more equal division, or a better showing of profits for herself; but here——"

"Don't be silly," promptly put in the object of his eulogy — "Tell us if anybody ever really does try to defend the place: can anything whatever be said in its favor?"

"Why, yes; let me see—they say that gambling is a primitive passion of human nature, and you'd better let people gamble in public than drive them away to do it in holes and corners. And then Prince Albert of Monaco goes off in a yacht and makes deep-sea dredgings and reports the same to learned societies. Prince Roland too is in science in some way or other. I don't know but all the other head stockholders are also. We must make note of it as an illustration of the tendencies of the times."

"I don't see what it illustrates," said Mrs. Skelmer.

"Science usurping to itself the efficacy of

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religion, doesn't it? The robber-baron nowadays eases his conscience by founding a laboratory or an aquarium instead of a monastery."

They came finally to the upper end of the rooms, where *Trent-et-quarante* was in progress. The lowest stake here was twenty francs, instead of five, and you might put as much as twelve thousand francs on a single chance. Here veritably was the high play. A very fashionably dressed individual was regularly playing maximums and the novices gazed at him open-mouthed. He handled his money, his pencil and marking-card in delicate lemon-colored gloves. He had not even louis d'or beside him, but nothing smaller than the splendid, large, gold hundred-franc pieces, and the rest of his capital was a thick wallet of crisp new bank-notes—which the spectators saw rapidly diminish.

So it was *true*, then? There *was* a place where fortunes were tossed about as nothing, where gold and bank-notes were but the merest trifles, and vast sums were forfeited on the turn of a card or the spinning of a marble.

"I did not really believe it," said Mrs. Skelmer. "When you think what merely *one* of those coins would buy for so many deserving people. Oh, it is wicked, it is too dreadful; why *don't* somebody stop it?"

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But Skelmer, who had been methodically checking off the transactions of this player for some time, broke out with :

“ Well, *he's* got about the smallest amount of amusement out of sixty thousand francs I ever heard of. That's what he has lost in the last fifteen minutes.”

Presently this player began to dispute with the croupier over some four thousand francs of winnings which were not allowed him. Fat Inspector Goldstein, looking on from a high chair of observation, sustained the croupier. The player got up in a rage, and made off, muttering maledictions. Even his maledictions, however, were hardly above a gentlemanly bated breath, and but little disturbed the normal quietude of the place.

A Chief Inspector was called and hastened after him, talking conciliatingly. “ Yes, *M'seu le Duc* ”—“ No, *M'seu le Duc*,” they heard him say. People gathered thickly around. It was a veritable “ incident.”

“ Bah ! they can afford to give him his four thousand francs,” said a bystander. “ It's the Duke of Dindon. He has often lost a hundred thousand at a sitting.”

The Chief Inspector evidently thought so too, for he brought “ *M'seu le Duc* ” back



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again and made the croupier yield him the point and the four thousand francs. But even then, *M<sup>seu</sup> le Duc* would not sit down to his game again. He thrust the bills into his pocket, and went off in unassuaged high temper. It appeared that he would not be mollified till the next day, for such scenes were not uncommon with him, such was his custom. Then, as if nothing had happened, he would return and resume the taking of the egregious hazards which put his name among the foremost of all those known to fame in this kind of disastrous financiering.

"Where *does* he get the money?" exclaimed Fanny Skelmer.

"America pays," replied her husband. "I guess you'll have to take a course of reading the *Crédit Lyonnais* newspapers yourself. He's got a rich American wife—even richer than the one snapped up the other day by that German prince who is said to be the greatest gambler in Europe."

"All this would sound more severe if we had no scapegrace husbands at home," commented Fanny Skelmer. "Oh, dear! there are some in Chicago *now*, that—Well! I can't go into that history here."

Leonard, too, had really been but half-

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hearted in his denunciations. The fever of play was upon him and was fast mounting to his brain; his money burned in his pocket. Each of the tables they stopped at was a centre of temptation to him. He had drunk in eagerly the small successes he saw, and endeavored to ignore, deny, reason away the only certainty, the dire, inexorable losses. He said—as each time that he came to Monte Carlo:

“Perhaps the luck will have changed at last; perhaps *this* is to be the day on which all will be different. Shall I be foolish enough to throw away the opportunity?”

“If we’re expecting to hear anything of the concert, it’s time to go in,” he said to his companions.

He led them to the beautiful, rich concert-room, decorated by the masters of Parisian art. Three of the wide, easy seats that afford such comfortable rest were vacant; just three and no more. The Skelmers and Miriam sank into them; Leonard took it as a manifest sign. He made as if he would go back and look for a seat elsewhere. Miriam made a final signal to him. “Don’t play.”

“No,” he answered, plainly; but this promise was made only with the lips, not with the

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heart; yet he half hoped some unseen force would enable him to keep it.

The great orchestra, that played so learnedly, gravely, tenderly, without ever a jar upon the ear of the most fastidious critic—the grand orchestra was pouring out the rich strains of the "Thousand and One Nights." He passed into the lobby and thence to the gaming-rooms again. He met almost immediately Louise Bradbury, moving about capriciously over the polished floor. People walked there as on thin ice. Her party had been out to the neighboring Café de Paris for incidental refreshment, and had made a considerable stay.

"I'm looking for a *red* table," she exclaimed, waywardly. "There's nothing but black to-day. Don't you want to come and help me find one?"

He went along with her almost readily. They said she was extremely lucky, and her play might serve as a guide for his own.

"So you came alone? Our party wasn't good enough for you, it seems," she chattered.

"No, I came *en famille*. The rest are in the concert-room."

"Ah! I see. Happy in love, unhappy at—" But his looks did not encourage her to continue.

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"Mr. Vancoort is predicting. He's in his best vein. It's really wonderful," cried Lady Greenock, calling them. Mr. Vancoort would cover his eyes for an instant with his hand, in reflection, then announce a number. It seemed that everybody had already lost on the mystic "9" he claimed to have dreamed of, and the same result now attended all the rest.

"It is strange," said the seer, apologetically. "I get them right in my own mind; whenever I don't play I invariably win. But there seems to be something about actually playing the numbers or telling them to others that upsets everything."

Thus he kept up his reputation with his all too indulgent circle.

On the other hand, stout, dignified old Mrs. Grandmore, an invalid, reposed on a comfortable sofa, and sent to the tables various obliging young people, who all returned at once bringing her handfuls of money.

This served to inflame Leonard Bond's impatience beyond further control. There were those who could win then, why not he? He took a hundred-franc bill from his roll, changed it into silver, and staked this piecemeal, in cautious play, taking only the even chances. He tried a new plan that Miss Bradbury

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recommended to him. Nor would he put down his money till the ball had begun to spin, so that if there were really any chance of the croupier's "placing" it, as some pretended, he should be beyond the reach of such baleful arts. All the same, and in but a few minutes, he was at the end of this initial capital. Within, he raged furiously, though, for the sake of his company, he struggled to preserve his most impassive mien. Yet more carking cares to take away with him, yet more of the bitter experience of defeat, yet more of the leaden weight that each successive visit hither imposed upon mind and heart, till the burden was becoming intolerable.

"*Can I afford this?*" he demanded, muttering out an irrational revolt of disgust. "What with the losses incurred purely to show the Skelmers the game, and the cost of railway tickets added in, it is something like thirty dollars for the day's little excursion. But this won't do : I must and will win it back."

He passed up a couple more bills to the croupier, and got gold. He threw down a louis, angrily, almost as if throwing it in the croupier's face. It chanced to fall near the 19. That was the day of the month on which he was born. It was something definite at least,

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so he took the rake and pushed the coin over upon that number in full. Then, as if this were not enough, he placed another, and yet two others, upon the first. Just at the last moment, when the ball was making its concluding turns and the croupier was about to cry his everlasting "Nothing goes more," he quickly bent forward, and with a last unreasoning movement placed four more louis at the corners, making the four *carrés* with 19. He hurled the money at destiny defiantly, feeling sure it would be lost.

"There, take the gold, and by double handfuls," he seemed to say, "from the man you use so ill, and who yet so well deserved happiness. —Only be quick about it."

"*Rien ne va plus*," croaked the croupier.

The ivory marble danced on the incline of the wheel, caught in one compartment after another, and flew again to the outer edge. Its gyrations grew slower and slower; it knocked as it were against the very cockles of the players' hearts. It poised capriciously on the verge of 35, almost fell into 15, a hair's breadth would have made the difference, and, tottering feebly over, it found rest in—19.

"*Dix-neuf, rouge, impair et passe*," called the croupier's mechanical voice, and he began

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to sweep in the losings from all sides, leaving on the table the winning stakes, to be recompensed after their kind.

“Nineteen” had indeed won ; it was about as improbable as being struck by lightning, but it had won. Leonard staggered, half dazed. Occupied with the effort to preserve his self-command, he could by no possibility have counted his gains. But Miss Bradbury did it for him. You were paid in proportion to your risks ; and the result of his audacity was something prodigious.

“Thirty-five times for each of the louis on the number,” she calculated deftly—“a hundred and forty. Eight for each of the four *carrés*—thirty-two ;—a hundred and seventy-two. In all six hundred and eighty-eight dollars, American money. Not bad ! not bad at all, for a single throw, *mon ami*. Keep it up ! ”

It was she too who supplied the enthusiasm. He affected a calm disdain for the lucky stroke, though in truth the revival of confidence within him was immense.

Some obliging person, with the air of a mere stranger, now made a place for him to sit down. There were said to be persons who kept seats at the table to resign opportunely to those who seemed promising victims.

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He recollected a saying that advised one to "play high with the money of the bank"—that is, with money one had gained—and he followed it.

An unerring vision seemed given him now to place his money to the best advantage. If he, momentarily, lost, he would play a martingale—with increasing stakes—and would recover in a final profit the sum of many losses.

"Will you mind if I play with you, *cher monsieur*?" tremulously demanded an old woman, in a very shabby gown.

She might have played as she pleased without consulting him; it was a superstitious way of trying to borrow his luck. But when she played with him they both lost, and she abandoned the attempt.

He was as much as two thousand dollars to the good. Then a slight nervous contraction, a foreboding, passed over him. He felt that this could not last; it was too good to be true; and he rose to go.

"Idiot! you have perfectly unheard-of luck," protested Louise Bradbury, in excited whispers at his elbow. "You're not going to get up now and throw it away?"

He sat down again. All still went well. He doubled his money and more; he had some



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fifty-two hundred dollars in all. Then he *knew* it could not last. He pushed back his chair and got up briskly, without waiting to listen to any further expostulations. He had enough for Barmasso, all the deferred payments, enough to make good his impaired capital, and something over and above even that. *He*, the unlucky one, had done this, at last. It was too wonderful for belief. A *cocotte*, with remains of a half-innocent sort of good looks, beset him, as he went away, saying impudently :

“Give us a louis, for dinner, will you? It was me being next to you, that gave you good luck.”

He did not stop to dispute her claim ; he had enough for all now. He handed her out the coin, and she continued her rounds, to beg still other louis from still other winners. In the warmth of his gratitude, Leonard gave a fee to his croupier also. The man took it and sent a keen little glance at his patron from half-closed eyes. Perhaps he did not feel that the august Principality had seen the last of its money yet.

Leonard threw himself upon a sofa, to think. Louise Bradbury was leaning in a plastic pose against its well-cushioned back. Piqued with him already for having repulsed her invitation to

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come with her party, she was almost alarmed too at the way in which the entanglement in play, into which she so ardently desired to lead him, was unexpectedly turning out. If such success should continue he would be likely to escape entirely beyond her reach. He was indifferent and distrait again. She could not turn the exaltation of his success to any sentimental account in her own favor.

“What a strange man you are !” she complained, at length. “You not only do not answer me, you do not even hear me.”

“In this place one is not a man,” he replied ; “ he is a gambler.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### DINING *EN PRINCE*.

“**I** TELL you what,” burst out Leonard Bond, presently, “as the upshot of this I want to give a dinner. I want to give the biggest kind of a dinner the Hotel Métropole can lay its hand to. We must have a lot of people. You can help me about it, if you will.”

Louise was very willing to do so ; Mrs. Lanfoot, the lively woman with the very bright hazel eyes, still more so. She charged herself to go about and give some of the invitations. Her financial resources were slender, and she got credit in this way, after a fashion she had, for paying off some of her own social debts. Any slight informality that existed was easily arranged. Some of the party had been watching his play, and they were all good-naturedly ready to eat a lucky gambler's dinner without feeling themselves under any great obligations for it.

When Miriam and the Skelmers came out

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from the concert-room, Leonard was brimming over with what he had done. He walked the lobby of marble columns with the port of a king. Though this luck at play should, logically, have been the very proof he was looking for of being unhappy in love, he found he could talk it over with Miriam better than with anybody else. He rattled on to her as eager as a school-boy, told her just how it happened, what hopes and fears he had had, what *coups* he had made. He felt himself the spoiled child of fortune, the favorite of all the fates. Others might lose; others might toil and drudge through life; but he was as one created apart, everything was to turn to good in his hands.

Miriam approved the project of the dinner. They could afford it, for this once, at any rate, and it would be an outlet to his excited spirits. But she hoped they were going to take the money and go away from the place and never come back to it again. Leonard brought her with him over to the beautiful new hotel to avail himself of her delicate taste in such matters in ordering the dinner. On the way he hailed three or four more friends, or rather acquaintances, and retained them all to dine.

"I countermand it absolutely," he cried to Amy Barr, Lillian Skobel, and their chaperon,

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who purposed to go off on the 6.20 train. "We insist upon your remaining, and we will see to your getting home safely."

To the *maitre d'hotel* of the expensive restaurant he said: "Arrange for a *lot* of people; see that there is enough for three or four besides this list in case we should run over. Don't spare anything, and, mind you, your choicest cooking, this time; there are *gourmets* coming who will appreciate it. Give us a field-day."

It was arranged that Miriam with her friends should stay in the comfortable parlor of the hotel to rest a bit before dinner, and he would rejoin them in time to receive the guests.

"And you will not go back to the tables, will you, Leonard, dear?" asked Miriam, affectionately.

But this was, by no manner of means, in Leonard's ideas. He answered her with a certain astonishment.

"Why, Miriam, what are you dreaming of? I've got the hang of it. I've got the tide with me, at last, and do you suppose I'm going to stop? What is twenty-six thousand francs? I am perfectly capable of making a hundred and seventy thousand, like Lord Buntrock, or even a million, like the Prince de Berlingot."

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"Oh, Leonard, how do you know they made it?"

"*Everybody* knows they did. All the newspapers state it."

He could not forbear a twinge of conscience to think how very lately he had taken the opposite view. And yet, perhaps, under the stimulus of winning, he himself now began to believe the stories.

"You have often told me the newspapers are subsidized to spread alluring tales, and keep quiet about all the dreadful things that happen here."

The young husband pooh-poohed all this, and was so positive in his opinion, that Miriam herself was almost convinced. He strolled over to the rooms again, leaving her behind.

It wanted then little more than half an hour to the time for the banquet. When all the guests had assembled, the host was not yet on hand. Much more than the polite delay that custom sanctions elapsed, and still he was not forthcoming. Miriam slipped away with Skelmer to bring him. She found him deep in play again at the same table as before. She put her hand on his shoulder, and he looked around at her with a haggard air, saying:

"Oh, yes, Miriam, to be sure. I'm not

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very hungry myself and I had almost forgotten the engagement."

He waited for the moving wheel to stop, gathered up some small winnings it brought him, and rose and accompanied her.

"And the luck still continues?" she asked, but with misgiving,

"No, I'm sorry to say not quite so well."

"How much have you lost?"

"About two thousand dollars, I should say."

"Oh! Leonard, you haven't? it can't be?" cried Miriam pathetically, and turning very pale. "Two thousand dollars of that welcome money, that delightful money, when it was once actually gained, and ours to do as we pleased with! Oh, Leonard, how could you let it go, you are always saying you need money to make you happier? We could have done so much with it."

"It was that cursed zero. I was twice on the point of making an immense stake, a regular fortune, but the zero knocks out everything, you know. If it hadn't been for that we should have had enough to satisfy us for one while. But I'll make it good. I know the trick now."

"Oh, don't, don't play again," she appealed, clinging to his arm, fluttered and frightened.

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"The mistake I made was in playing in an off-time," he went on, quite disregarding her, "between daylight and dark. I ought to have waited. Full daylight is favorable to me, or else night. We must hurry up the dinner as much as we decently can. The train doesn't leave till eleven; I'll get in another hour or two of good work before that, and put the record back where it stood."

"I should like it so, so much, if you wouldn't try any more. Only let us keep what we've got."

He continued to override her protests with an extremely superior air. "Another thing, Miriam," said he, "I notice I have a peculiar sort of physical sensations in this matter, a warm feeling and a quickened pulse way down to the ends of my fingers, when I'm going to win. On the other hand, when I'm going to lose there's a sort of chill about me. I must make a study of the symptoms and attend to them. I got too confident, you see, and went on playing more or less at random."

At the dinner he was involuntarily *distract*, and under other circumstances it might have proved a constrained affair, instead of the jollification it should be *apropos* of such a peculiar occasion. But the people of the world exerted



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themselves and amused at least one another very well.

Scaithwaite, with the serious burden of his "systems" off his mind, was a good *raconteur*. So, too, was even bald old Vancoort, who knew everybody and everything, having been a comfortable ornament of society all his days. Bright-eyed Mrs. Lanfoot was currently known among her acquaintance as "great fun," and Miss Bradbury was scarce her inferior. They made the yachtsman guest—who had just raced his craft across the Atlantic—promise to give breakfasts on his yacht, in their honor, and the naval officer a ball on his cruiser, lying in Villefranche harbor.

"What! not know my story about the man hanging on under a bridge who let go to get a better hold?" cried Louise Bradbury. "Where have you all been? You must hear it."

And Leonard thought the implication was for him, and meant that he should not have stopped his fortunate play when he did.

Louise Bradbury's peculiar gifts better fitted her to shine in the entertainment of such a circle than in quiet *tête-à-tête*. Her mother had let her—in truth almost forced her—to do always just as she pleased. Of the two kinds of virtue, it might be said that she had that which

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was founded on a thorough knowledge of evil rather than ignorance of it. It may have been founded somewhat too on expediency rather than principle ; but it was, after its way, quite an inflexible sort of virtue. She might associate with free livers, and perhaps even had no great prejudice against many of their doings, but—beyond a certain point—what they did was not for her imitation ; she had no wish to follow them ; simply it did not suit her, that was all.

Her mother talked of a plan they had of taking up their permanent abode at Nice. “ It is more or less cosmopolitan,” she argued. “ You can see people if you want to, and you need not if you don’t. It has climate, creature comforts, and you can go out and drive every day. As we have nothing to fix us anywhere in particular, I don’t see why we should not make Nice our head-quarters.”

Lady Greenoch pointed them out at an adjoining table, a lady dining in a rather flirtatious way with a young man, and at the dessert openly puffing a cigarette. But Lady Greenoch did not complain principally of her manners ; on the contrary.

“ She gives smart parties in London,” she said innocently. “ Would you believe it, I first

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introduced those two people, and they stayed at my house in Surrey, but ever since they have completely left me out of it. They have treated me shamefully."

Leonard had said to Miriam, in arranging for the dinner, that he wanted to see for once how it would feel to do things *en prince*. He had duly impressed the restaurateur with his ideas of magnificence, and the bill-of-fare showed it. They had *huîtres de Marennes au gratin*, with Chablis; they had *côtelettes de grives*, with Chambertin; they had *chaud-froid de filets de poulets, à la Russe*, and *petits pois à l'Anglaise*, with Château Yquem of '58.

The viands won the open admiration of the guests. "It's just simply *épatant*, it's *stupéfiant*," commented Vancoort. "It knocks you out."

Naturally, this excellence showed itself in the bill. "If it comes within the odd two hundred dollars—out of the five thousand two hundred—I shall call it about right," Leonard had said to Miriam, when his capital was at the highest notch. When the accounts were put in, his dinner was three hundred dollars instead of two.

"Lucky we didn't have to chip in and pay the shot ourselves. Well out of it, eh?" said Scathwaite to Vancoort at a favorable oppor-

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tunity. They had divined perfectly well what was passing during Leonard's delay to appear.

The host had bunches of beautiful roses for the ladies, though, fortunately, this was not one of the luxuries that cost dear. The party sipped its coffee and *liqueurs* with epicurean deliberation, and for all his impatience to be gone, Leonard could not politely hurry them. Their restaurant was in the bright new arcade above the Casino park. As they stepped out into this arcade, after the dinner, they heard merriment in another restaurant alongside—the toasts and jesting from a “Punch of Honor” given by some young French officers to celebrate the advancement of a comrade to a higher grade. The windows of the fine shops were all ablaze in the electric light with costly jewels and such like gifts designed only for bearers of full purses.

Leonard's guests strolled to the end of the terrace, before turning to separate. Moonlight whitened, like a softer daylight, the little-frequented gardens between them and the sea, and, behind them, the bold prospect of mountain and cliff. They could plainly see Cabbé-Roquebrune, a little village (all ready made to the water-color painter's hand), which has the air of having slid part way down the mountain-

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side. The legend is that the land-slide was miraculously stopped in its course by some diminutive plant, a sprig of flowering broom. The smokers took the legend to exercise — not over brightly—their wits upon.

“Fancied the climate was better below, and took a tumble to the idea,” said the yachtsman, in American slang.

“Sort of cöoperative toboggan-slide,” suggested the naval officer. “I don’t see why the company didn’t make it go, they came down so handsomely with the rocks.”

“Lacked bowld-er-ness, after all, I guess—ha ! ha ha !” laughed Mr. Vancoort. But even his warmest admirers thought this too atrocious and quite unworthy of commendation.

Leonard had but a brief time at the tables before the departure of the train that adapts itself to the closing hour of the Casino, taking back the great body of its evening frequenters. He won, or lost, but a trifle in this last experience, and the grand result of the afternoon remained unchanged.

There was the same group in the compartment when going back, as when coming, with the addition of Hazlitt, the Consul, who got in at Monaco. He had by no means come in connection with the reprobate Casino, but, in-

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stead, to visit his consular agent at the Prince's seat of government proper. He listened to the story of Leonard's winnings.

"Now then, Bond," said he, "I'm going to talk to you. You've got a very comfortable little sum, snatched from the very jaws of destruction. Everything they have there is derived from the spoil of other victims, so you needn't trouble your conscience about your right to keep it; your title is clear. If you stop now, you will be the one man in a million to come out ahead of the game. If you go back, you lose all, as certain as that you are alive. It is only a question of a little time. If I were you I'd be the one man to laugh at Monte Carlo on the right side of my mouth. I'd stow away that money and never go near the confounded man-trap again."

"Hazlitt cultivates us only on condition that we let him give us advice," said Leonard, with an air of indulgently explaining the Consul to the party.

"Well, it does us no harm and does him lots of good; so why not?"

"So it's preaching in the desert, and hammering on cold iron, is it?" said Hazlitt, looking a trifle offended.

"If I'm a man in a million, why not let me

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have a little advantage of it? It's pretty hard to stop without getting back to one's best figure. If I were where I was at five o'clock this afternoon, I'd be satisfied to call it quits."

"The true gambler spirit. If he lose he bemoans his lot in the bitterest terms, if he wins, no matter how much, he's as doleful because he hasn't won more. I appeal to Skelmer, as a practical man, to say if my views are not correct."

"Oh, yes, *do* talk to him, both of you," appealed Miriam, eagerly. "He's so dreadfully set in his way, sometimes."

"If you want to hear straight common-sense from me, I tell you Hazlitt is sound," said Skelmer.

"Consul, this makes us prouder than ever to know you."

"You may not think it, but I have not always been the quiet party you see me now," said Skelmer, deprecatingly. "When I was in business out in Denver—that was before the doctors got in so much of their fine work on me—I was most as wild a one as they make 'em."

"Were you, indeed?" put in his wife, in affected surprise. But, as she must have known by long experience of the thoroughness of his conversion, it is possible that she was really as much pleased as shocked at his admission.

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I've seen some big games in my time, and I can sum up for you as the result of it all that the successful gambler does not exist. If he has lost, then he must play to get even ; if he has won, then he must play to win more ; and so it goes till the end."

"Granting all that is claimed for honesty over here, it's a brace-game, a man-trap, all the same," added the Consul. "The percentage is such in their favor that they are bound to get you, as sure as the sun shines. Otherwise, they couldn't keep open for a single season."

"You are too many for me. I'll tell you what I'll do : I'll deposit the bulk of the money, in the morning, and keep out only the loose coin I've got about me," examining his pockets to see what it was—"five hundred francs, to start me again. You recollect I made all I've got from an original hundred francs."

And further concession than this he would not listen to.

For upward of a week after this, Leonard Bond did not return again to Monte Carlo. He himself was cooler and calmer in mind on the succeeding day. He looked with greater respect at even the diminished figure of his win-



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nings, and manifested no desire to go and play the surplus he had reserved for that professed purpose. He began to work with new courage, took up several unfinished projects, and started an important new one.

They waked betimes at the Villa Soleil. At the first light of dawn the bugles of the *Chasseurs-à-pied* were wont to sound the *reveille*, and soon the drill-sergeants began putting their awkward squads through their monotonous "*Un, deux !*" "*Un, deux !*" up and down the parade on the Place d'Armes below. The whole battalion would sometimes start for target-practice at the Var at three o'clock in the morning, going by the old road over the *Col* of Villefranche with their pack-mules and mountaineering apparatus complete. Somewhat disturbed by them at first, the family came in time to like these evidences that the world was astir early. Not that they themselves arose at once ; far from it. In due course a whiff of fragrant smoke would come up to them ; then they knew Barbara was kindling the kitchen fire with pine-cones, and soon she brought them their coffee in bed.

And this was peculiarly the hour of their little son. No soldier that the bugles waked was a tithe as active as he. Once aroused, he was irrepressibly bent upon play. Sometimes he

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would pretend to drive "Jojo," with strings attached to the canopy of his large, antique, nut-wood cradle. More often, he would patter back and forth over the floor, from his father's bed to his mother's, diving into either one in turn like a little battering-ram. He delighted most in a game he called '*Gringolè*. It consisted in his riding actively, as in a stage coach, on his father's knees; suddenly Leonard must topple him over, crying "*Dègringolè—tout le monde par terre*;" he greeted his successive overthrows with joyous shrieks, and ever demanded more. If there had been any misunderstanding between the parents of Little Son over-night, his innocent gayety was a solvent of unpleasantness, an influence in the direction of better feelings that was hard to resist.

Leonard was nicer to Miriam too of these late days. One morning, when Lucien had been talking with zest about "the big country"—by which he meant the large open tracts away from the houses of men—Leonard proposed:

"Let's go over to the new cottage, to-day, take our lunch, and boss Barmasso at our ease."

His current work was in that cheerful preliminary stage where he saw his way with con-

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fidence to the end, a stage in which he was wont to feel that he could well afford to allow himself a holiday at present.

On their way, Miriam stopped to add something to their provision from the little shop of the *laitier* who supplied them with butter, milk, and eggs. A frumpish-looking old man—member of the Knope family, who were said once to have lived in grand style at Beaulieu, but who now occupied but a modest chalet just above the port—this old man was concluding some friendly words with the young market woman in the shop as they entered.

“*Vous comprenez bien ce que je vous dis là, n'est-ce-pas ?*” he said, in French with a German accent. “You must not work too hard ; you must take great care of your health. Tell your husband I said so. A young woman like that must not work too hard,” turning to the new-comers. “*C'est une très brave femme.* We are all very fond of her.”

“*Mon dieu !* yes, that is all very well,” commented the *laitière*, with a half resigned sigh, when he had gone ; “but if they would only pay the money they owe us ; it is more than a hundred francs. They have finally given us their note, but who knows when we shall be able to collect even that.”

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"And where does their money go?" Leonard inquired.

"O! to Monte Carlo, of course. They take every cent of their income over there before anybody here ever has a chance to get any good of it."

"That eternal Monte Carlo! it seems as if we heard of nothing else in the country but the losses and calamities it occasions," said Miriam.

"As to the losses, that's because people don't know how to play," rejoined Leonard, complacently. "If you had observed my play you would have noticed its prudence as well as its boldness. I am satisfied from my late experience, that I could go over there with a moderate capital and make, say, \$200 a day, right along—I don't speak now of high play, you see, but only the moderate sort."

"I don't know what more I can say to you on that dangerous subject, Leonard; I've exhausted all my arguments."

"That's a dear good girl, quite right! don't say anything; leave it to me. Two hundred dollars a day, that's, say, \$70,000 a year, made by devoting one's attention exclusively to the matter. A good deal better than sending over problematic designs to unappreciative

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publishers, or even to appreciative ones—eh? If I had but \$70,000, or better still, \$100,000, the product of only a little over a year's work, I could afford to let the place alone for good and all. The sum isn't great, but it would be quite a modest fortune for people like us. We'd give dinners, then, and show Nice what some good taste with a little money could really do. I should also have double or quadruple prices for my work; for not being obliged to sell, people would have to come to my terms instead of my going to theirs. When you think of it, though, the difficulty of finding investments and the low rates of interest prevailing nowadays," he went on, in his sanguine process, "I think I ought to make the limit \$200,000, instead of \$100,000."

"No, no," exclaimed Miriam, in piteous entreaty.

And her protest against the higher limit had, by implication, almost the air of permitting him to try for the lower.

## CHAPTER V.

### A DEPLORABLE QUARREL

THEIR drive took them round the deep, narrow indentation of the bay of Villefranche, then across the bridge at Beaulieu, and out along the back of bold Cape Ferret. They paused where a charming group of parasol pines looked down upon the pretty fishing-village of Saint Jean. There stood the new house.

Barmasso paid, the work was going forward finely. The nucleus was an ancient olive-mill disused for a hundred years or more. It stood by the brow of a craggy slope, which descended in terraces. Old olive-trees gripped their tough roots into the foundation-walls, delightfully weather-stained. A long, one-story portion united two unequal wings, of two stories in height. Leonard had torn out the interior, made a corridor and a long, large, chamber, part salon and part studio, in the centre; fitted his other rooms into the wings; and there was coming on a spacious, simple, comfortable

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house that could hardly fail to please any lover of the home-like kind of charm.

"It is going to look fifty years old the moment it is done," said he. "I should be bored to death with the usual waiting for a new house to settle itself."

The view thence, especially when, at sunset, the light mellowed the grand cliffs across the gulf, threw violet shadows into the gorges, and brought out the two ancient cities of Eze and La Turbie, on the top of those same cliffs, was scarce less than heavenly, in all its lines and hues.

The workmen exchanged a few leisurely comments in Niçois or Piedmontese patois, but did not hasten their pace on the coming of the owners. Little Lucien was amused with the wide, blue corduroy trousers that some of them wore, with deep pockets in them to hold their tools, and with the red cap and sash of a 'prentice boy, a nephew of their cook, Alexandrine, who sometimes came up to the house to beat their rugs. In their company, he very soon came within an ace of falling into a mortar-bed.

Leonard was having a new long walk made, some ground cleared in a sheltered spot for carnations, which give a profitable market crop; thickets of heliotrope set out near the porch,

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and orange and lemon trees transplanted. Miriam advised him in all these projects. Then they spread luncheon upon the smooth top of a rock, alongside which were some seats also formed of the natural rock.

Little son, in particular, was enraptured with this arrangement. Everything began most charmingly, but shortly a contretemps arose. Miriam had forgotten the salt, and there was no means of getting any. Leonard's uncertain temper had soon turned it into the text for a general arraignment, on philosophic grounds.

It was unpleasant, to be sure, that their sharp-set appetites should have to expend themselves upon the insipidity of viands entirely devoid of salt, but that was a mere nothing in comparison with the alarming traits and tendencies on her part—the utter neglect of household duties, and the like—of which it was inferred to be an indication.

Miriam, who had once been a goddess on her pedestal, had now to accept reprimands like an idle school-girl. Alas! he himself was often enough now the cause of deep reflections, not favorable to the interests of every-day life. When he was absent, her fancy hovered round him yearningly. She was dreading vaguely the passion for play. Did he indeed tell her truly



### *A Deplorable Quarrel*

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of all his doings? Had he perchance gone heavily into play, even before that late notable experience? Would not a foolhardy confidence inevitably lead him back? His displeasure was wont to increase the dreaming habit against which it was often directed. To-day her nerves had been fluttered by the unusual circumstance of being asked to accompany him, and had been disturbed still further, at the last moment, by some perversity of Lucien's. She had arranged the picnic repast with her own hands; the omission had been made, she knew not how; there was a cruel fatality about it. It was indefensible—yet, somehow she could not now always express regret even for her own fault with the proper compunction. Perhaps she felt that she had been blamed so much without cause, or with little cause, that a large balance still remained in her favor.

She stayed on listlessly at the table, when Leonard went to direct his men. She listened to his voice, from afar, and watched his movements as she always liked to do. Leonard had been her hero, the idol of her adoration. He was so still, indeed, but she saw herself condemned to watch a gulf between them ever widening. With a safe expansiveness she

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poured some of her sad reflections into the ears of little Lucien.

"Mamma keeps thinking and thinking and thinking," she said, "oh, so hard, so hard. She cannot do anything to help the dreadful way that things are going. She can only hope and pray for the best. Sometimes she is afraid that she will have no more feeling left, but will grow hard and cold like one of these stones."

"Poor 'ing, mamma!" said Lucien, sympathizingly, but even he was hardly willing to stop long enough from his childish plays to give her a little pat on the cheek and a soft little kiss.

Except their hospitable mayor, who had spent his liberal wealth in creating a veritable earthly paradise at the entrance of the bold romantic cape, few had yet sought the spot for homes. The land was cheap, but before becoming available the rocky soil had to be cleared by blasting; which entailed an expense much more than the original purchase. The rock blown out, the fine red earth, of excellent quality, though scanty quantity, was carefully put back in place. Leonard went to look at a substantial wall being set up along his front line. He complained because he was not able to get

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from the slow authorities the final grade of this front to adapt his wall to it.

Presently he returned, and alleged that the afternoon chill in the air was coming on earlier than usual ; that he must go down to his nursery-man in the village and bring him back to see some faults in the arrangement of the trees ; and so he urged his family off home. The jarring incident, perhaps too the talk of the morning, had revived in him some agitating ideas.

He put Miriam and the boy into the Saint Jean break, which hourly passed their gate. Then he himself pressed "Jojo" swiftly along the Lower Road, by the sea eastward. In an hour's drive he was at Monte Carlo. While Jojo was waiting to be put up, a flashily dressed individual with a very prominent stomach, looked on from the open vestibule of the Café de Paris.

"Want to sell?" he asked, approvingly, with a bad Alsatian accent, making all his "f's" "v's," and his "p's" "b's." "I got a party as was lookin' lately for just such a trap as that. If you want to sell, any time, you know where to come. Ask for Banfi, in the billiard-room of the Café. I'm mostly round here."

He named, too, a shrewd price, which would have been low indeed for the turn-out ; but

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Leonard paid him little attention, and went on into the Casino.

After midnight, Miriam, being awake, looked out and saw the light of "Jojo's" lanterns dancing grotesquely on the dense foliage of the inclined drive. Leonard put up his horse, went to bed, slept late the next morning, and arose with the air of not being much refreshed. He was amiable, nevertheless. He announced his intention of going to Nice, and asked if she had any commissions for him. She sent her watch by him, to be put in order; a valuable watch, one of her wedding-presents. She was forever forgetting to have it done.

He took it along with him, left it at the jeweller's, in the Avenue de la Gare, and then immediately entered the granite colonnade of the Crédit Lyonnais, just above, and made a liberal draft on his winnings, lately deposited there.

Both he and Miriam, no longer novices at these *fêtes*, had forgotten that it was one of the active days of the Carnival, which extends its varied diversions over nearly a fortnight—one of the battles of "confetti." He was too wary to trust himself within the precincts devoted to the fray without the protecting costume and

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wire helmet of convention ; for by doing so one might easily meet with serious harm. On the Place Masséna the surface was white with the broken plaster pellets, and from the Square des Phocéens to the end of the Place Charles-Félix, where the principal Homeric conflict raged, they lay as deep as a veritable snow. The brilliant carnival toggerly stood out upon the white ground with singular vividness. No one spared his strength in hurling this stinging ammunition. Sometimes it poured down from the gayly decorated balconies in whole bagfuls.

Even without the prescribed limits, on the Avenue de la Gare, one had need to be on his guard against an occasional sly shot. As Leonard Bond sallied forth to go to the train, he was encompassed, just at the corner of the Boulevard Victor Hugo, by a frisking group of maskers, all dressed precisely alike in scarlet dominos with a pattern of demons embroidered upon them. They took hands around him and held him captive. He knew not how to escape, yet he had little time for his train, and he must. Something about them indicated that they were persons of position, from the stranger's colony, and not rough, common people. It came into his head that these were "The Twelve Devils," of whom he had heard, banded together to pre-

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serve one another's incognito and give one another aid and comfort in difficulties. It seemed to him that he had vaguely heard that Louise Bradbury was to be one of them and was dancing her way in this mad company through the Carnival.

He reached out brusquely, as the only resource available, and seized the figure nearest to him. It was clearly a woman, from a sense of trim slenderness and grace penetrating the cumbersome attire. She seemed to yield with momentary pleasure to his embrace, though protesting with smothered shrieks. The others flew to her assistance, then he easily broke through and was free.

"Oh," sighed Louise Bradbury, for it was she, raising her visor an instant above her flushed, laughing face, "I'm all but suffocated. I hope it will be somebody else's turn next time."

Something in Leonard's serious air and the direction of his steps made her divine where he was going. She had seen little of him of late. She shook off her engagements, and that evening was at Monte Carlo also.

It did her no great good, except that she had the pleasure—if it was one—of seeing him lose, lose, lose. He was bearish and rude; he was

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not made of the stern stuff that enables the gambler of tradition to bear toward his losses a front of adamant. On that day and the next, he finished his fifteen thousand francs, and furthermore, sending good money after bad in the usual effort to redeem the case, he added a liberal slice from his own economies.

This being done, he stopped for another period. He had tried still one more illusive road to fortune, tried it most thoroughly, and that was the end of it. He struggled not to disclose to Miriam what had happened, but in time it would come out. She stood aghast when she heard it; she had thought him too sensible, too wedded to certain definite advantages the money was to procure them, to hazard any tangible part of that large sum, even if he went back, as she feared. And now the beautiful money, their little fortune, was all gone from them again.

"Oh, Leonard, Leonard, why *did* you not stop, that first afternoon, when we had it all?" she exclaimed, piteously.

Her lamentations renewed his own sharp sense of loss, which his efforts at a philosophical temper had begun to dim. There came on a spell of rain; for nearly a week it poured down at frequent intervals with all the violence manifested on the rare occasions when it rains in the

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Riviera. Scourging gales beat upon the windows at night ; the sea was of a muddy green, indigo, black, purple, anything but blue ; and they noted it raging in such an angry surf against distant Cape Ferret, as if it expected to wash that stern Iron Cape away. In the pauses or abatement of the storm, Leonard and Miriam would walk the garden path often under their umbrellas. New wild ~~flowers~~ flowers sprang out of the humid soil ; the grass grew almost visibly ; on the peaks of the distant mountains the rain became a powdering of snow, and gave palm-adorned Nice the aspect of an Alpine vale. When the rain ceased, all nature was glistening bright and fresh and virgin new. A sponge seemed to have been passed morally and physically over all their life preceding.

“Don’t you think you might promise *now* never to play again ?” asked Miriam. “If you would only do that the lesson might prove worth all it has cost.”

This time he was in the mood, and he promised. He even spoke of himself openly as one of the *décavés*, the cleaned-out. He announced his new resolution to all.

“What makes you think your husband will never play any more ?” asked Mrs. Skelmer, a little afterward.



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"He has *promised* me," returned Miriam, with dignity.

"Well, I wouldn't tell you this, only that a word of warning in time—But no, good friends though we are, I'm sure you will never forgive me if I go on."

"I insist upon your telling. Do you mean to imply that he has been there again?"

"No, indeed, at least not that I know of. But the other day, Newman suddenly asked, 'What will anybody give me for a first-class new point in roulette?' Mr. Bond, quite excited, replied, 'Without knowing anything about it, I'll give you twenty francs.'"

"Don't you see it was only his joke?" said Miriam, much relieved. "He and Mr. Skelmer are always having their jokes together."

"How stupid of me! It *must* have been. But I'm such an ignoramus in those matters, I'm always taking everything as serious."

After the first explanation, Leonard and Miriam talked little of their loss; but it was ever present to the minds of both. Leonard had reconciled himself to his lot, as he said, since he needs must and destiny would give him no escape from it. It was a lot that many would have thought a very enviable one—but this enforced resignation found vent in increased

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acerbity of temper. Bickerings between them now, that would once have been trifling, became serious quarrels.

One evening, while they were at dinner, the *facteur* brought their letters. Leonard called him in—this pleasant little postman, who, on a rather bowed pair of legs, in his blue uniform-coat, with despatch-box on hip and a packet of journals in his hand, so faithfully trudged the country roads in their behalf.

“How is it you come so irregularly these last few days, Maurel?” he asked. “The letters, too, seem behind their dates.”

“*Vous savez*,” returned the *facteur*, his cap respectfully off, and blinking a little at the light, in contrast with the darkness without; “the *receveur* [the postmaster] has just retired on his pension. He’s served thirty years, and had a right to demand it. There’s a new chief down there.” He lowered his voice confidentially, and yet as with a desire to say nothing impolitic of his superiors. “And he’s brought in some employés who don’t understand their business. Things are rather upside down at present, but that can’t last. It is to be hoped so, at least.”

Leonard began to pull open their correspondence, while Miriam was serving the soup, and

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he set to grumbling at the unsatisfactoriness not only of the particular letters just received but of epistolary correspondence in general.

"There's hardly a letter in a hundred that's worth its postage," said he. "I suppose it's a lost art. Look at our dear friends, the Wells-bros, here, who fill up four pages for us once in six months—not a thing about what they've been doing, not an answer to a question; yet the time has been when we were inseparable. It is true they do better than the Norwalks, who never write at all."

He soon came to the monthly bill of Schwartz, their grocer at Nice, and made this the text for a new lecture on economy, the form of reproach his irritable temper now most often took.

"This won't do," pursing his lips severely over the statement; "the household expenses have got to come down."

"They *have* come down. You know I have done my very best."

"It would be more evident if we could see the figures. For an intelligent person, Miriam, you have some very singular ideas of keeping accounts. For instance, we lay in a quarter's supply of coal one month, and because we get none the next, you call it an economy. No

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averaging, no spreading of expenses over their proper periods."

Miriam hastily sent Barbara on an errand to the farm-house. Luckily the servants understood no English, and, in spite of the earnestness in their language, had not yet divined their quarrels. They only fancied sometimes, seeing her sad mien, that Madame "ennuy   herself" after her own country.

"And what more natural," they said to each other, and to Angelo and Angela, the farmers, "when you think how all her family and relations are away off in far distant America? It must be two or three whole days' journey from here."

"It's unfair in you to charge me with that way of keeping accounts," rejoined Miriam. "I can tell you every item, if you ask me. So many little things come in to interrupt when I am working at them, that I have not yet carried them out. And it's only such a short time since we began this system."

This was true enough; their plan, until lately, had been only, knowing they had possessed a certain sum of money at the beginning, to vaguely wonder what had become of it, when it was gone.

"I would guarantee to keep them perfectly

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with five minutes a day," said Leonard, impatiently.

"You have a very good opinion of yourself; allow me not to share it in all respects."

She felt outraged in a sensitive point. She recalled her laborious efforts over interminable columns of petty figures, her total want of experience in these matters, the difficulty of getting proper bills from the tradesmen, bills in proper time, and the like. As a rule, she was much more self-contained than he, but stung by his cool assumptions, she made him, for once, an answer not of the soft kind that turneth away wrath.

"The truth is," said Miriam, "it is your disappointment and vexation over the loss at Monte Carlo, and not any real fault in the way things are going here, that make you so unreasonable. Yes, you could spend nearly three hundred dollars in one dinner there, yet you begrudge a sou in our most necessary expenses. It is unfortunate that your own home should have to be made the scapegoat of those unworthy feelings."

She did not know how truthfully all his aberrations for many months past might have been ascribed to the same source.

"It was my *duty* to make that attempt at

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Monte Carlo," he returned, defiantly. "It was no mere love of excitement, no mere passion for play. You can't accuse me of that."

"A curious idea of duty; and how, pray?"

"There is reason for alarm about the future, and something had to be done for the support of the family. My work doesn't go; you see well that it doesn't. My head aches and my heart aches over it; instead of turning to it with pleasure, I take every pretext for escaping from it. I hate it. So we can't depend upon that any longer."

"It's this very distraction, this most unusual excitement that causes it. What more natural?"

"No, no, it isn't that," going on to indict himself fiercely. "It is because I have no real head for it, no real talent nor taste for art. It's been all a mistake from the beginning, and the publishers and the public are right."

"Then, Leonard, dearest," she suggested, thoroughly sympathetic on seeing him so depressed, "why *don't* you go into something else? If your work is so hard for you, let us sell the new cottage—much as I should regret it—and go back to America. Why won't you let my father do something? He could put you into the iron-works. That would serve until

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a better place offered. You know I've asked you to do it before."

She had indeed asked him before. Hearing him so often complain, as now, that his vein of talent had run out, or had never really existed, and being no great judge in the arts herself, she had ended by taking him at his word. She innocently offered these suggestions toward a practical, money-making occupation, thinking she spoke quite after his own heart and just as he would have wished her. In reality they rankled in his mind above all other injuries.

"What!" he exclaimed, inwardly, "to be an artist, and have a wife who does not believe in you? To find no triumphs, no belief in your inspiration, at home, in the one quarter where beyond all others they should be found, the one refuge when all others fail? Ah, yes," he summed it up, "I was indeed 'unhappy in love,' I was indeed right in throwing myself into play. Such a situation never offered its cursed advantages more clearly."

As to the alleged disparagement, it did not exist in the least in Miriam's mind. She had loved him as an attractive, companionable human being; she had made him the god of her idolatry, hardly thinking or caring what his life's work was to be. She was not a connois-

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seur in art nor letters, and had no deft opinion ready for every subject, especially not for the many fantastic subjects to which he often pushed his speculations. But, for a trifle gentler treatment, she would almost have given him her heart's blood. It was most lovable and pathetic to see her sometimes tremulously strive, for the sake of pleasing him, to make a choice, to have opinions, preferences, animation, about matters in which she really felt not the slightest trace of interest.

It might have been amusing to a looker-on to see how little Lucien, sitting up much beyond his usual bedtime, imitated the movements of that great exemplar to his childish admiration, his father. Quite unconsciously, and in good faith, he copied Leonard's animated gestures, his whole air, and even leaned his dear little head on his hand from time to time as in pensive sadness. But there was no looker-on to see this; he was left quite to his own devices.

Leonard, having so vehemently established the fact that he was not a genius, could not immediately turn round and maintain that he was. That would have been rather too ridiculous. He could only brood deeply over his wrongs, and seek satisfaction on some other ground.



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"It ill becomes you to advise me to change my profession," he said, "when it is you who have done so much to make it untenable. The loss at Monte Carlo, too, was mainly through your fault."

"My fault?" she echoed, in consternation. "What *can* you mean?"

"Simply this, you checked me—or had most to do with checking me—at the moment of success which could never be recalled. When I went back, a week afterward, it was too late. I was like a man trying to catch a railroad train which is running away from him at the rate of forty miles an hour."

"You shall not treat me with such injustice," she interrupted, in passionate resentment. "I try not to answer you, because I know that success in argument cannot bring back your affection; but I must, I *must*. You turn everything against me, even my effort to save you from a ruinous vice. I will not stay here. I—I—will leave you. I will go and live alone. Oh," choking with sobs, "if I could only die, if I could only die!"

But at this moment a still sharper cry, a cry of lamenting from little son, broke forth, and effected an instant diversion in his favor. The poor cherub, entirely forgotten for the moment,

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had burned his rosebud of a mouth with a spoonful of some forbidden dish to which he had injudiciously helped himself on his own account.

“My poor child! my *darling!* my DARING!” cried his mother, hysterically, catching him to her breast. She bore him out of the room, covering him with comforting kisses; while her own passionate tears, roused by so different a cause, rained down unchecked and mingled with his.

Leonard was made extremely uncomfortable by her tears, though hardened to them, in a way he would never have deemed possible in the early days. Then a single one of them would have almost broken his heart. He was fully aware of his injustice. Yet even this could not allay the demon of discontent by which he was possessed. He stood irresolute; lit his cigar twice and let it go out again. He said he would apologize later—he would ask her forgiveness, in fact. And then he went away to his own room and fiercely tried to work at his papers. The more and the more he was baffled by them, the more testily he declared to himself that he was a very much-abused individual.

He went down and shut up the house, as his custom was. Somewhere about midnight he

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was drawn from his all but futile labors by hearing little Lucien call out persistently. He went to him. There was no one to attend his childish whims; his mother was not in her room; her bed had not been disturbed. Made excessively uneasy, Leonard searched everywhere within, but she was not to be found.

"Has she, indeed, gone away?" he queried; "has she kept her hasty word? Is her patience at last exhausted? It is not possible that there is going to be a scandal in our family such as one reads of in those of others—that all is at an end between us!"

He recognized now her long-suffering patience. Suddenly another thought made his heart beat with a panic of alarm. Where had she gone in the dark and alone? Surely not to Nice, and there were no friends nearer. Could she—but no, no, such a thing was wholly beyond belief. And yet, as he feverishly lit a lantern and hurried without, he was overpowered by a flood of memories, memories of her dearer self, their happier days, he ascribed to her the whole category of beatific virtues, as people do to a dear one who is dead.

He found her sitting on a bench, down the long walk, a dim figure in a cloak, lonely in the dark. The stars shone, it is true, but it was

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after midnight, and she was one rather timid by nature, with no taste for tragic posing or romantic situations. He had so great a sense of relief on seeing her, that he unconsciously felt himself already acquitted of need of repentance, at least in part.

"Isn't this silly? isn't this imprudent, Miriam?" he began, as if commonplace words could somehow best take off the edge of the distressing situation.

She made him no reply.

"But you'll catch your death of cold, dear, sitting out here so late. Remember it is March, and not July."

"I am not cold. Please let me stay," she responded, in a low, desolate voice, very musical, for her sweet voice was a distinctive part of Miriam's charm.

"I did not know you were in the garden when I locked the house; I should never have dreamed of shutting you out."

"I know; but it does not matter."

Then he endeavored tenderly to take her hand and to lead her back to their dwelling.

She started in aversion when he touched her. "No, no," she said, "I am afraid of you. It is more lonesome there than here. Oh, it has all gone on so long. You are so hard with me,

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so cold, so bitter. Oh, I do not want to go home any more." And she burst out anew into most violent sobbing.

God, how this terrible indictment smote his heart! What! more lonesome in their own fair home than out here in the coldness and blackness of the night, and far away from her kin in a strange land? Lonesome with him, afraid of him, she who had been the nearest and dearest to him in all the world?

"But Miriam! but darling!" he cried, now thoroughly overcome, "you cannot mean such cruel words? I have been wrong. What I said was extreme—unreasonable—entirely unwarranted. It is continually so. I beg your forgiveness with all my heart, dear little Miriam! Sweetheart! think of all we have been through together. Come, let us talk about it. It is not so bad as all that."

He placed himself beside her on the bench and put his arm about her strongly, affectionately, to retain her in spite of herself. She should not escape him so.

"I do mean it. I—I—," chokingly, "thought if I were all alone out here in the dark, perhaps I might have strength to—to—to die, and leave you and little Lucien together—without me." She sobbed anew, in

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pity for herself and this piteous prospect. "But I was afraid; yes, I tell you truly, I was afraid. Oh, why have I not more courage? Why have I not the courage to do it?"

This lovable natural weakness moved him more than any display of tragic strength could have done. He clasped her most tenderly, most warmly, in his strong embrace.

"There, there, these are very silly little ideas," he said, in a rough sort of soothing way. "There is no need of this. You must not make yourself ill. Let us go back to the house; that can't make things worse, either one way or the other, can it, just for this once?" And he drew her gently along. She shivered in the chilly night air, and reluctantly yielded.

"There, we will discuss it all. Rest your head on my shoulder: let me pet you, as I used to do—so. Don't you see now, dear, that it isn't so bad yet. We mustn't feel in this bitter way toward each other. I am sorry for it all, from the bottom of my heart, from my very soul. I am never going to be hard with you, never going to breathe a cross word to you again."

What an inexpressable comfort these words gave her. The storm had spent its rage and

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was dying away ; it left, as it were, vague Æolian harmonies in the air, and rare shells and perfumed weed had been thrown up from the profoundest ocean depths, which, but for the storm, would, perhaps, never have seen the light.

"If you could only *make believe* to like me, if you could only *pretend* to love me a little, though you really do not," suggested Miriam, "even in that way I could almost be happy."

"Make believe? pretend? but I do love you, dearly. Oh, do not doubt it! Only sometimes I am so cross, so wretched, I am hardly a rational being."

"But those are the very times when you ought to let me comfort you. You must always feel sure that after a little while I will do everything you want me to." He pressed her to him anew as they walked, inexpressibly touched by her sweetness. "Only have a little patience with me. I have nobody in all the world to love but you, why then should I not want to please you? Advise me ; show me how to learn ; tell me things beforehand, and don't wait and find fault with me when it's too late. I loved you so dearly, Leonard, I love you so still, that I should have to give up everything to you, at length, whether it were right or wrong."

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“And you would have stayed out-of-doors all night, poor little thing?”

“I was startled when I heard you shut the house up, but—but I think I should have been too proud to call to you to let me in.”

“And to-morrow you would have been down with a raging fever; and I—— Oh, no! Oh, no! we must not talk about such dreadful things any more.”

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## CHAPTER VI.

### INVOKING LUCK

LEONARD BOND kept his promise well; he spoke no more words of harshness to the gentle Miriam. But this did not free him from money embarrassments, nor did it put an end to the engrossing passion that had drawn him in. On the contrary, he found, in the very reconciliation and good understanding between them, support for a singular new perversion of duty.

"It is now more than ever incumbent upon me to play," he said, "for the sake of this dear Miriam, since I know how well I love her. The dangerous situation shall be redeemed before she becomes aware of it. I must save her and the boy from actual destitution that threatens them in the failure of our present resources and the paralysis of my capacity for work."

He began to cherish the conviction that, in all this, fate had only meant to try him. It

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could not be that he, who—with whatever becoming concessions to modesty—believed so firmly in his own ultimate success and his natural right to be among the elect of the earth, was to be allowed to fall into actual straits and squalid misery. But all round the wide horizon there appeared, to his distorted vision, no other resource except in play. It was necessary that his luck should change; therefore, he argued, it must change.

He had no desire to deceive Miriam, but he persuaded himself that it had to be done in the interest of her own peace of mind. In the interest of her peace of mind, therefore, he made great efforts at cheerfulness in her presence; he affected to have set vigorously to work again; and as often as he absented himself, he invented ingenious pretexts of necessary visits to libraries, to acquaintances, or their new house.

On the afternoon of the day when he finally went back to Monte Carlo, there were five regular trains billed. As the scheduled hour of each in turn approached, he fought doggedly against the besetting temptation. For the afternoon he conquered, but in the evening he affected to go to Nice, and was soon at Monte Carlo, beside the tables. Fortune was no more propitious than of old; he departed a heavy

loser. He drew more money, and the same ill chance attended him.

From a third visit, however, he brought away a really considerable sum in winnings. Elated, he took the money to Consul Hazlitt, and begged him, with feverish prudence, to keep it for him.

"This time I have broken away in season and not waited for the tide to turn against me," he said with pride. "Put this money in your safe for me, Hazlitt, and don't give it up to me, do you hear?—no, not for prayers, threats, nor compulsion."

But, no later than the very next day, he was back in a flurry of agitation, to demand it. It so happened that the Consul was absent, and it was not the secretary's affair to give it up, even were the key of the safe in his possession, as it was not. The Consul would return within the hour.

"But I cannot wait an hour; it is beyond endurance," grumbled the visitor.

"He paced the floor, fuming immeasurably. His eager eyes would have pierced the safe like diamond drills, and his impatience was of a dynamite quality that might almost have blown the door from its hinges. Fortunately Mr. Hazlitt came back sooner than was expected.

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"I find I've got to have that deposit, after all, old man," burst out Leonard, without further preamble, though endeavoring to impose a certain calm upon himself.

"You told me not to give it up to you—not for prayers, threats, nor even 'compulsion.'"

"Well, you see I don't use prayers or threats, and I have too much respect for that muscle of yours, as an old college boating-man, to try force. But just give me the money, old fellow, and be quick about it! I'm in something of a hurry."

"Where is this money going to?" the Consul asked, gravely.

"I—er my builder—the fact is I hadn't made my calculations quite right. I'll let you know all about it later." He had not even taken time to frame a plausible excuse.

The other was inclined to expostulate with him at some leisure, but Bond broke forth, almost beside himself:

"God! Hazlitt, give me what is mine. I'm not asking you for any of *your* money, am I?"

It was a tone that even patient friendship could not endure. Without a word further, the Consul turned to the safe and handed him out, from one of the small compartments, the

### *Invoking Luck*

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thick package of bank-bills that had made but so brief a stay there.

"Forgive me!" exclaimed Leonard, when the package was recovered—for he had had an insane sort of dread that he might never possess it again. "Let me take back my words. It is no way to talk to you, in return for your many kindnesses. The fact is I need the money. I——"

"I have no right to call you to an accounting," said the Consul, suavely.

But he took a resolution henceforward to mix himself up much less in the concerns of others. This resolution, however, did not prevent him from going out next day, and again a couple of days after, to see if anything was wrong with the family at the Villa Soleil. But to all appearances everything there was placid and serene.

Leonard lost, in short order, the money thus withdrawn, and then he entered upon a career of reckless financiering. He exhausted all his near-by resources, and next drew upon those farther away. He even got money over by cable from America. He paid exorbitant interest for short-time loans; and the proceeds of the whole were tossed into the same all-devouring gulf.

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When he went to his bank, he no longer set foot in the comfortable reading-room, where the strangers perused their papers ; and with the same object in view, to avoid acquaintance, he made his way to the trains for Monte Carlo by the shabby Rue de Russie and Rue Paganini, instead of up the Avenue de la Gare. Ambitions, loves, hates, every other passion and interest were postponed for the moment to his blind struggle with the god of chance. His work, his hopes, his past life, his friends, Miriam, he himself, were as if involved in a thick fog. The only spot of light apparent in it was a pale, sickly gleam, reflected from the green table. In this false radiance he was vaguely conscious of a circle of heads around him, heads of tourists, diners-out, cocottes, roués, blacklegs, looking on at his play with indifference, with amusement, with gaping wonder or with scorn.

Still he played. As fortune went against him, he abated the magnitude of his early demands. At first he had demanded riches ; then he would have been content merely to recover his losses ; then only the half of them ; and now, finally, he was ready to say :

“ I will play no more, if I may get out of it only enough to take us back to America and keep us there, till I can get something to do.”

## *Invoking Luck*

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"But, strangely enough, he was less gloomy now over great losses that threatened their very means of existence than he had been in the beginning over comparatively petty ones. He was possessed of a general apathy, only broken at times by the gambler's mad exhilaration.

"One must have plenty of 'sand,' as Skelmer says," he assured himself. "He must be able to look unflinchingly into the very eye of ruin; boldness will vanquish it, as the determined glance of the human eye quells the fiercest wild beast."

Some people, looking on at his heavy play and losses, and knowing his modest way of living, asked "Where *does* he get his money?" But the gambler always has money. It was reassuring to him now to feel that large capital was not necessary. His one great success had been made with but a hundred francs. As long as a single five-franc piece remained to him, he might at any time hear, as it were, the voice saying "Turn again, Whittington, lord mayor of London." A single five-franc piece was not too small to become the seed of a dazzling affluence.

His assets at length consisted of no more than the house in process of construction and a few forlorn building-lots in America. The latter

## *A Pound of Cure*

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could not profitably be turned into cash, and indeed might be crossed off the account altogether. As to his house, the object of so much labor and affection, he decided that he would not sell it, but would mortgage it. He went directly to the well-to-do Barmasso for the loan. His builder received the request with a deprecating shrug, "*Ces jours-ci*—and *enfin*, and *et puis*, and what will you?" stammered Barmasso. "If it was only a house in the regular style, I wouldn't mind letting you have—so much; but, being as it's an old kind of place, made after ideas of your own, and nobody would take it off my hands if anything happened to the mortgage, I can't possibly let you have more than—so much." And he named a ridiculously small sum.

"It's infamous!" said Leonard. "You know all the good material that's gone into that house; you know the real value of it better than anybody else, because you've built it. But I can't argue with you. Will you stand to the offer you have made?"

"I'll stand to this one anyway, M'sieu Bond." And he diminished his offer anew, by an appreciable fraction.

"Can you let me have the money at once?—on the instant?"



\*

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“Hem! h-m! this is Tuesday; the quickest I can let you have it is on Saturday.”

Leonard was obliged to close with him. This transaction, the cold shrewdness of Barmasso, sent a throb of terror through him. His apathy was stirred; the enveloping fog in which he was voyaging was briefly rent, as by a lightning flash, and he heard the roar of snarling breakers, and had an imminent vision as of his total undoing near at hand. If now he could only command some small resources, in the meantime, even very small ones, he might redeem all before Saturday, and not have to give knavish Barmasso the mortgage after all. Casting about for something on which to raise money, he thought of his watch, not a very choice one, and he pawned it and lost the proceeds the same day. Then he pawned Miriam's watch, lying at the jeweller's for repairs. He was heartily ashamed of the latter step, but assured himself that it was but momentary; it should be back again in the jeweller's hands on Saturday, whether he lost or not. But lose, of course, he did.

His own wits had served him but so poorly, that he had long felt the need of some higher wisdom to enlighten and guide his play. It was an aspiration not likely to be gratified, but

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it led him to discourse with Scaithwaite, the system-maker. Scaithwaite was only too content to secure an intelligent listener, and they sat down a couple of hours over it at a little table in the Café Régence, at Nice. It led him to buy all the brochures with infallible secrets for winning, displayed in sealed envelopes, at the news kiosks—and sold dear, because no purchaser would ever think of buying one a second time. And it led him vaguely among the charlatans whose offers of infallible systems, in the newspapers, he had been wont to mock at so scornfully. He knew, as well now as then, that they were unreasonable, absurd, but the chronic gamester does not disdain to be unreasonable nor even absurd. Out of all the bushel of chaff, there might come a small grain of wheat, in the shape at least of some useful suggestion that would throw him out of his rooted habits and set him upon some fresh new proceeding. The benevolent "Professor," the "Ex-croupier" of Monte Carlo, the distinguished "Engineer of the Roads and Bridges," "A.A," *très sérieux*, and "Y," also "very serious," being seen and corresponded with, had no balm of healing. He even visited the motherly Baroness de Niche, whose hand-bill called down righteous maledictions upon the Casino and

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would sweep it from the face of the earth, in philanthropic relief of the human race, and he found the "Baroness" yet a little sharper than all the rest.

"Such semblance of a plan as they have got is simply copied out of old Cagliostro's book," said Leonard, summing them all up. "And their game is threefold—either to make off, pure and simple, with the money put in their hands, or to pluck their victims at private play, or to serve as stool-pigeons for Monte Carlo, where no doubt they get a commission on the business they bring."

"The numbers tend to come out of the roulette-wheel in mysterious order, controlled by sympathy among themselves," said the Baroness de Niche. "I have found the secret of these series through my profound investigations, by means of the science of algebra."

Her secret was divided into two parts, for sale separately or the whole for a round sum—which was of no moment at all in comparison with the losses one might sustain without it, at a single sitting. No, no, no aid, no resource here; all was hollow, all was fallacy and mockery.

Nor was there more in the private roulette, defying law, to which he was introduced, in a

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considerable villa, not far from the Pont du Magnan. The risks were greater, the management probably even less honest than at Monte Carlo. Some people there told him of clairvoyants who had done most wonderful things. To make his experience complete, he fatuously visited some of the clairvoyants, bought their lucky numbers, and some of these numbers, written out on tissue-paper, he soaked in his cup, and swallowed with his breakfast coffee.

On Friday morning, preceding the Saturday when he was to have his loan from Barmasso, he was once more, despite clairvoyants and lucky numbers, in the unhappy class of the cleaned-out, the *décavés*.

That morning, Miriam having gone down to the village to do her marketing, Leonard caught sight of Jojo, led out by Angelo to crop some mouthfuls of fresh grass. For the first time, Jojo occurred to him as negotiable property.—A thought to be repulsed with loathing!—No, a thought to be accepted with gratitude, a sad necessity, no doubt, but a happy solution that might save all.

“Miriam will grieve, to be sure, and little Lucien will be inconsolable for a while,” he reflected. “But, then, Lucien is forever getting under Jojo’s feet and in imminent danger

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of being trampled to death. And it *may* save us the need of putting the mortgage on the house. And, furthermore, I shall not sell the pony, but only put him in pledge ; and I shall get him out again just as soon as my winnings allow it."

He ordered Angelo to give Jojo an extra feed of oats, and then harness up and let him know when all was ready. While waiting, he took the seat in the corner of the house-terrace, and lost himself in intricate tables, involving mathematical doctrines of chances, on which he was now always figuring.

Little son ran out from the supervising care of Alexandrine in the kitchen, and began a favorite game of throwing things over the parapet. Athletic for his years, he would unconsciously take strong, proud little poses, like a baby Ajax defying the lightning. He threw over all the small articles he could lay hands on, and the worst of it was many of them were useful ones. You might have thought he was lightening cargo to avert an impending shipwreck.

Tired of this, and yielding to the magnetism the larger body naturally exercised upon such a smaller one, he gravitated nearer and nearer his father. He played about him for a while, as

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quietly as a little mouse, bringing leaves, sticks, and pebbles, and arranging them beside him on the bench. Then he would put them into one of his father's side pockets, then industriously take them out again, and put them in the other. He ran down the garden-walk, where wild flowers were springing in the tall grass—he himself was but a larger flower among them—and brought back, for his father's button-hole, a coquelicot that he had ruthlessly broken off, with much too short a stem.

When Leonard was his normal self, the doings of his little child were a continual source of curious interest and affectionate pleasure. But of late these pretty nothings were rather a reproach to him; he was inclined to avoid the baby caresses, or to get them over with as soon as possible. This, too, in spite of his specious argument that it was largely to insure the child's happiness that he was engaged in his present singular career.

Again, at a most engrossed moment, when Leonard was counting about three abstruse columns of figures at once, Lucien approached, with his innocent, adorable little smile, that showed all his excellent white teeth, and called "*Manina ! manina !*"—Little hand ! little hand ! a word caught up from his nurse, Bar-

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bara's semi-Italian patois. It was his ingenuous idea that his father should now stop everything for his benefit, and that there should be nothing more important in the world to do than to hold his dear little paw in both one's own.

Finally, he must be taken up into Leonard's lap. He was as gentle and adroit about it all as an irrepressible child could be, but his mood, nevertheless, was both affectionate and inquisitive.

While Leonard absently kept on with his work, he was sensible that Lucien was laying his soft cheek against his own, was exploring the dog's-head pin in his cravat, with murmurs of "bow-wow! bow-wow!" and was taking out and replacing his handkerchief. Suddenly, too, he became aware that he was being relieved of a special memorandum-book he carried in his inner pocket, that the infant had it in his hand, was sliding down to the ground with it, and it was about to be carried away for good.

"No, no, not that, Monsieur *Touche-à-tout*, Mr. Touch-everything, *that* won't do at all," he protested, rousing himself to take it back.

All things, as far as Lucien was concerned, were divided into "No" objects and "Yes" objects, and nearly everything belonged to the former category. Such a memorandum-book

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as this most decidedly. Had it not been recaptured, it would certainly have taken a bold flight over the terrace wall to be lost in the garden beds below.

Angelo came to announce that the trap was ready. "I'll be down in a moment," said Leonard.

He rose to go ; but, taken by a singular impulse, he caught up little Lucien into his arms and carried him down toward the middle of the garden walk. He paused there between borders where scarlet flowers kindled their bright flame amid the grave, poetic green of the olive-orchard. He cradled the infant a little in his strong embrace, pressed him against his breast, then, lifting him higher, tenderly kissed him twice. Lucien took the kisses in a half-coquetish way almost like that of a girl evading those of her lover.

"Now we are alone, all alone, papa and his dear little boy sweetheart," said Leonard Bond. "Here we are, all by ourselves, out of sight and sound of everybody. Nobody can hear what I am going to say to you ; and you yourself, poor little midget, don't understand the first syllable of it either. I want you to wish papa 'luck.' Papa is going away pretty soon and has need of all the help and favor he can



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get. Who knows? perhaps the wish may have some good effect, coming from your innocent mouth. There, now, my dear little pet, say, after papa, '*luck!*' Say it this way—so—after papa—'*Luck!*' "

"*Luck!*" repeated the child, displaying a perfect docility that was by no means habitual with him. And he smiled radiantly up at his father, as if he appreciated the humor and the compliment of it that they two should have a secret between them.

Leonard kissed him again and put him down. He had at once a remorseful sense that he was desecrating the finest feelings of the human heart to the purposes of his unhallowed occupation. In a few moments more he was bowling along the smooth road to Monte Carlo, driving their pretty pony, Jojo, to the sacrifice.

He alighted before the Café de Paris. Entering the billiard-room, he walked at once straight across it, and stood for a moment by a window. Although he appeared quite unobservant, his cursory glance had assured him that Banfi, the habitué of the place, the man he wanted, was there. He must catch his breath a bit first, and think in what words the sacrifice he was about to consummate were best proposed.

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As he stood by the window, the view commanded the mountain prospect, with the mediæval village of Roquebrune, near the top. Yes, it was evident there had once been a landslide, the traces of it were plainly visible on the scarred cliffs; and in the hamlet itself boulders and houses were indistinguishably mixed together. The village had slid, and it had somehow been stopped in mid-career to the sea—stopped, the story went, by a sprig of flowering broom—the *cytissus* of Virgil and Theocritus, the plant on which classic shepherds were wont to pasture their goats. For an instant, the legend came vaguely before his mind, with the scene.

“Ah, if only something could have stopped me in that way!” he sighed heavily.

Turning back, he sought out Monsieur Banfi, the man who lent money at one hundred per cent. a day to persons temporarily embarrassed in their dealings at the Casino, there just across the velvet lawn. The usurer paused in a game he was having with a young man of weak chin and snaggly black teeth, and came forward billiard cue in hand. His gross, heavy jaw, his drooping eyelids, his florid costume, already portended an unfeeling hardness; and, on the other hand, something in Leonard must have indicated to his experienced eye both the nov-

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ice and his urgent need. He repulsed the application as soon as it was made, saying, roughly :

“ I’ve got no money.”

“ If the collateral were good, I think you could find some,” rejoined Leonard, quietly.

When, in fact, Banfi was led out to see the trap, the affair took quite a new complexion. He walked around Jojo, poked her in the withers, and felt of her legs. His admiration, it was plain to be seen, still held good.

“ I can’t loan any money on that outfit,” he announced.

“ And why ? ” demanded Leonard, surprised and aggrieved.

“ Because I like it, as I told you before, and I want to *buy* it.”

“ No, no ; I can’t think of selling.”

“ Hold on ! don’t gather up them lines yet. You can make more out of me than you can out of anybody else. You may get something on the outfit, but they’ll charge you a couple of hundred per cent.—the good borrower pays for the bad, you know—and anyway, what you want to do is sell. When you come to play, you’ll find you’ll have need of all the money you can get, and then you’ll wish you’d listened to me.”

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It was but a foregone conclusion that Leonard should come to his terms. He took a last glance at the trim cart that had drawn them in their modest triumph at the Battle of Flowers, and lingeringly patted poor Jojo's neck for the last time. He went and cast down in the gamesters' temple the pieces received from this species of treason. The invocation, too, through the aid of his little son, proved as absolutely ineffective as all the rest. At the end of the day, could he have redeemed Jojo for the round disk of a single five-franc piece, he would not have had wherewithal to do it.

But, at any rate, the day of small things was past. How could he have expected anything from the use of such mere dribblets? he asked himself. He now welcomed with some cheerfulness the morrow and Barmasso's mortgage-loan. "Here, at last," he said, "is something you may really call a capital."

By the time he entered into the possession of the mortgage-money, the train had gone. Delaying a little, he might have caught another, and been set down at Monte Carlo for a couple of francs. But he could not wait for another. With such fever of impatience was he consumed that every instant seemed precious. Not a minute, not a second of the valuable time was

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to be lost. He laid out forty francs, instead, for a carriage and pair, in the Place Masséna. It was a pair of the swift trotters, with jaunty cocks' feathers in their bridles, which tear like mad along the road back and forth from Monte Carlo for the especial use of the grand gamblers and similar luxurious persons.

"*Hue ! hue ! allez ! allez vite !*" cried the coachman.

He snapped his whip ; the little bells on the collars jingled gayly, and the flying hoofs of the horses devoured the ground.

"If a man take on with fickle goddess Fortune the airs of a successful player, perhaps she'll really think him one and so make him one," philosophized Leonard.

Once, during the journey, his face, set and eager with expectation, relaxed into an indulgent smile, when he had discovered in his side-pockets a miscellany of twigs and pebbles that Lucien had put there the day before. He tossed them out into the road.

"Dear little chap !" said he, half aloud, "we ought to have a civil engineer, all to ourselves, to keep up with his numerous inventions."

He scarce remarked his own home, as he flew past it. Could he have done so he might

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perhaps have seen Miriam sitting under a tree in a very disconsolate attitude. She had missed Jojo, and she had guessed at the cause. She sat much, all that day, under a remote tree, in the orchard. Alexandrine, Barbara, and the farmer's family thought that "Madame" *ennuy  * herself and mourned for her own country unusually that day. She was so lonesome, indeed, that day that even the amusing pranks of little Lucien failed to divert her.

## CHAPTER VII.

### “RIEN NE VA PLUS”

THE day was lovely and noticeably mild—for even when it is very late spring, in this slow-moving climate, the chill has not wholly gone out of the air. Leonard looked with amiable eye upon the animated market-scene at the foot of the gray rock of Monaco, and at the jaunty yachts at anchor in the little bay, and sniffed agreeably the pleasant salt-water smell that came to his nostrils while he mounted the long incline from the Condamine. But when he came to the Casino, though the sun was full upon it, it had for him a cold look. This florid edifice—that surpassed all of its kind ever since the days when farmer-general Benazet, under royal protection, used to manage the play-houses of France—began to have for him something very hollow and factitious in its gayety.

The epithets in the hand-bill of the Baroness de Niche recurred to him. There must be much

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of truth in them ; he had been almost too busy till now to think about it. For the first time he began to see the place as indeed a charnel-house and a cavern of terrors. It had now all at once put on its summer aspect. Some of the rooms were closed, in others the number of tables had been reduced, in proportion to the lesser *clientèle* expected, and the workmen were already tinkering with their annual additions and repairs. Several of the princely names and greater magnates among its frequenters had flown ; still enough remained behind to leave it all its characteristic air, and the same preponderant element of shady-looking persons of both sexes continued to color its aspect.

As he went in Leonard scrutinized the faces of the people in the lobby, and especially of those who were departing, to see if he could discover in any of them the story of blasted hopes and irreparable overthrow. But the ruling traditions of the place, the long-established sense of "good form," repressed all unpleasant manifestations there, subdued all participants to a common level of quiet and decorum. It was not over-easy to select from the rest those who were written in sour misfortune's book. Men being rather given to glorifying their con-



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querors, their destroyers, more than their benefactors, it may be that even those who suffered most but felt the greater reverence for this species of juggernaut whose wheels went over them.

As for himself, Leonard's situation was now such that he felt that he had almost less to fear from going forward than going back. He was like the soldiers taken between two fires, or rather those who dread the severity of their own officers more than the enemy. He was in a condition to say,

“ If I desire to live I must conquer.”

The very first person he met in the rooms was good old Major Longwood, the retired English army officer. This acquaintance looked flushed, disturbed, not at all his usual self, and Leonard, recalling the story about him, was greatly surprised to see him there.

“ It's refreshing to see you concede a little to human frailty, after all, Major,” said he. “ I thought you never came here.”

“ Oh, yes, I come occasionally. I—I used to come here at one time, more or less, more or less, you know,” he returned nonchalantly.

“ So it is not true that he was paid his ten francs a day by the Administration to keep away?” thought Leonard, as he moved on.

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And presently he was far too much engrossed with his own affairs to think anything about it.

As if going into battle or on a dangerous journey, he had certain preliminary arrangements to make. He mounted to the comfortable reading-room, above stairs, where all the newspapers and fine stationery were at everybody's disposal. He sat down to write, but gave up that idea. He merely took five hundred francs from the bulk of his money, enclosed it in an envelope and put it securely in an inner pocket.

"A prudent person," he said—he still considered himself a prudent person—"must foresee the worst. If things really go against me, this will serve us as running expenses a while. Otherwise we shouldn't have a cent to bless ourselves with."

The sum thus kept back was to be considered as if it did not exist; he was to stop at that point. "He really ought to have left it behind, on deposit, or with Miriam," he said, but he argued that he had not had time, and also that the latter course would have aroused suspicion. He struggled with himself, too, to make the sum a thousand or two thousand francs, instead, but he could not "spare" so much. To "foresee the worst," with a comfortable budget of bank-

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bills, to the amount of a great many thousand francs, in one's pocket, is not easy. The truth is, he quite refused to foresee anything unpleasant. “To consider what I shall do if I lose,” he said to himself, “is about as absurd,” he might have said, “as for a man to consider what he will do after the universal deluge or any other cataclysm.”

He entered the gaming-room, and went first to one of the *trente-et-quarante* tables. It was in his plan of campaign to risk a certain amount there. The chances of winning at that game were said to be better, and he felt that he had never given it a fair trial. He had some varying successes, and then the allotted sum melted away. He took it with considerable calmness; the real test had not yet come.

It was, as he looked at it, another duty performed, another number crossed off the list of possibilities. He had never believed much in the *trente-et-quarante* at best.

As he was going away his path crossed that of the *cocotte* who had once begged a louis of him for her dinner. She had not been near him of late, she seemed to know how things were going with him.

“*Rien ne va plus,*” she called after him, mockingly, as he passed.

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Presently, by an unusual stir he was drawn back again to the same table. People were standing up on the chairs and sofas in the neighborhood, and there were even heard some half-suppressed murmurs of applause. A man had broken the bank, as the saying is—that is, he had won all the money allotted for the day's operations at that table, and it was necessary to send to the treasurer, in another room close by, for a new supply.

"A *richard*, a Croesus, a great cattle-dealer from Chicago," cried the crowd. "He's won near a million these last few days."

"Bah!" grunted some sceptic; "very good. But let's wait till we see him get away from the place with it; that's all."

At any rate, he *had* broken the bank for the moment. Leonard watched with the others till the fine, liveried footmen brought on the fresh supply of funds, and this success of another gave him a very bitter feeling. He was astonished at it and to find himself saying, "Of course, the great winnings must be made by some millionaire, by someone who has no possible use for the money when won."

All preliminaries being now fully exhausted, the moment had come for really serious play, the play that was to reinstate and save him. His

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Waterloo was to begin—except that he did not in the least admit the notion that he was on the Napoleon side of the Waterloo.

“The request I make of destiny is reasonable and modest,” he said. “I merely ask for what belongs to me, what I have lost of my own. I demand no profits, no brilliant fortune. This being granted me, and having had my lesson, I forswear any and all conceivable games of hazard forevermore.”

Surely a reasonable request, to which hardened Dame Fortune might have done herself much credit in listening. The famous “red” table at which he had made his great gain was one of those suppressed for the summer season. He had thought of choosing it, and looked upon it with suspicion of bad luck that it was missing. Still it had played him false so much, given him such staggering reverses afterward, that it really made no difference; so he chose another at random.

People made way for him, gave him a place now, almost as a matter of right; it was well known that he was not of those who indulge in mere affectations of play. He was a client after the Administration’s own heart.

He played away methodically a thousand francs, making every piece go as far as possible.

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He had not stopped for breakfast, and about two o'clock it occurred to him to go out and get something to eat. Not that he was hungry, but one ought to fortify himself for the struggle.

When out on the esplanade he turned mechanically in the direction of the arcade with the fine cafés, but yielding to a more economical impulse, passed through the Hotel Metropole and out on the other side, where the palm-trees around its grass-plot have little electric lights flowering in them at night. Not an unnecessary centime must be spent now—it might make all the difference in his fate. He knew of a restaurant where the whole repast would cost hardly more than the fee he would have to give the waiter below.

Up the hill, hidden amid the foliage, some new streets were squeezing a scant foothold out of the side of the mountain. Glaring new houses and hotels seized upon every inch of the rocky slope not absolutely precipitous, and hung over the deep gorge of Sainte Devote with a daring that made one fear to see them fall down upon the theatrical little chapel in its depths. Leonard turned eastward, instead of penetrating this quarter. He passed a church, with ambitious cupola, presenting a bold religious front,

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there where religion would last of all be expected, and kept along the straggling business street, the Avenue St. Charles, which, later, becomes the road to Mentone.

His restaurant was clean and good, if modest. He wondered if some of the others were players down on their luck like himself. Even the people of the Principality, who made their living out of them, were wont to speak with contempt of the *joueurs*, the gamblers. There were two that were certainly not players. One was like an English clergyman, and his companion might have been a divinity student. The elder man had very stiff sandy hair, projecting upper teeth, and a semi-invalid look. Their boots were white with the dust of a long pedestrian tramp. They began to lament the crying evil of Monte Carlo in that rhythmical, "dearly-beloved-brethren" sort of tone which corroborated their clerical look. They spoke openly, as if, since it was in English, nobody could possibly understand them.

"I'm told one of the Yorkshire Longwoods was very keen after it at one time," said the younger man—"Major Longwood, quite ruined himself, you know, had to get out of the army—and all that sort of thing."

"A sad case—a sad case. I knew some of

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the women of his family—and dear, good women they were.”

“I’m told he’s come into quite a fortune again, has the Major.”

“I heard it, too, a few days back. Let us hope he’ll make a different use of it to what he did the last time.”

Leonard could hardly fail to be struck by this. Exciting things, then, were in store for the genial old Major once more, and his unwonted presence in the place was well accounted for.

The clergyman’s diatribe even charged the Casino with vulgar cheating. “It’s alike the world over,” said he; “don’t tell me the contrary. They lead the victim on, allow him to gain a trifle, and then fleece him to their heart’s content.”

“It’s shocking, shocking. And can nothing be done to put a stop to the place altogether?” he asked; then went on.

“The worst of it is that even warnings often act only as an enticement. Some of the most incurable cases are those of people who have come over to see what the dreadful place they had heard so much of is like. The enlightened sentiment of Europe will yet reach this pest and sweep it away. In the meantime it seems as if



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the only remedy—a poor and weak one—consisted in not going there one's self, and never saying anything to anybody about it, good, bad, or indifferent."

They made Leonard Bond suffer a moment of keen anguish. He might not even have had a fair chance against hazard; like the most besotted of simpletons he was perhaps merely the victim of cheap trickery.

But he shook off the feeling, saying, "I must not listen to such things, I shall be 'rattled.' I have need of all my calmness, all my powers, this day beyond every other."

When he was going back, the village of Roquebrune again casually caught his eye, as it is wont to do the eye of the passer-by.

"There!" he exclaimed, mentally, "was a case of providential interposition. It was going on to be swallowed up, and it was stopped. Why should not Providence——"

But he broke off at this, reproaching himself for his idle complaints, recalling well that Providence does not go out of its way, but is inclined to let all human acts reap the natural consequences belonging to them, to the bitter end. But why indeed should he complain, since he felt that he had certain victory before him?

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He began anew. He played mainly upon the dozens and the columns, keeping a piece or two at the same time upon numbers selected at random. He chose the number of the cab that brought him over from Nice; the date of his birth; the day of the month; the number of the battalion in garrison at Villefranche, the 24th Chasseurs; the former lucky 19; half of the number of the Kharkoff's house on the Promenade, since the whole number went above the limit; the number of Madame Radamoff's rings; and so on and so forth. It was curious to see, since *some* choice must be made, the far-fetched expedients that determined it.

As often as he would win a trifle he felt, with a little glow of confidence, that the grand rally, the great final success, was now beginning; but such confidence would soon be swallowed up by far much more than proportionate reverses. Once when he was about to draw in some of the gains that fell to him, a quick hand was beforehand with him and snatched away two gold pieces that belonged to him. He looked across and saw with great astonishment that it was done by the Mrs. Owlsby whose perversion by play had been the subject of so much gossip. It is a trick with sharpers, who find their opportunity in the inattention or

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timidity of certain players. His own country-woman, then, the dame once prominent in the best American social circles, had fallen to this. He cast an involuntary look of protest at the croupier, but Madame Owlsby was beforehand with him too in any proposed objection.

"No, no," she insisted, brazenly, "the louis are mine. I put down my stake first. Everybody saw—I appeal——" Leonard simply bowed his head in cold politeness; he had no intention of disputing with such an antagonist. It was precisely upon this that she had counted; there were no lengths now to which she would not go.

Leonard played simple chances and complex chances, now fostered a certain number, now followed the progression of *paroli* or the *coup de deux*, and tried, by doubling and tripling, to combine in a final gain the sum of many losses.

As if the nickel roulette-wheel, in the midst of the grass-green cloth, were some magic spring, he plunged into the circle of its fascination with tireless persistence seeking to seize the treasure that might be concealed in its depths.

Presently he heard a group of people, which he knew to include Louise Bradbury, laughing and chattering behind him.

It was very late in the season for them to be

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in the Riviera, he found himself reflecting. Why were they not now at the Italian lakes or dispersed to all the four quarters of the earth? Sir Prosper Greenock, M.P., however, had been detained to meet some fellow-directors of his great companies, who had just arrived at one of the hotels here. Lady Greenock could be heard urging him to play one of her American friend's lucky numbers.

"Mr. Vancoort is in great form again to-day. It's really wonderful," she argued.

Leonard's losses were putting him in a bad humor, and the gayety of these prosperous persons irritated him with them and with himself. He found them cool, sensible, and shrewd, for all their inane affectation of mirth. "*They* play their few louis and win rather more often than they lose," his cogitations ran, "and precisely because they have no need of them. One could go on all his days at that rate. They can enjoy the music, the good cheer, the jollity, the spice of wickedness, and go comfortably home to bed. After a single day of it they are in good condition for another. And I, what must I do? I, oh, immeasurable idiot! must *stay*. I, forsooth, must play deeply, seriously, over head and ears, and for very life and death. Prudent I, of course, must jump into the rapids.

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*My* amusement must simply be to clutch wildly at some chance projection of the shore that may serve for a landing-place. Well, a landing-place is probably near, for this can't go on forever."

A well-known prince and a "milord" next passed through the rooms, creating considerable stir. It seemed that the milord had bet the prince he would drive a four-in-hand down the very long stone staircase at Monaco leading from the palace to the market-place. The milord had won; they had come over to the Casino with a party of admiring followers to celebrate the event, and they scattered gold upon the tables right and left as they went along.

Then came a stir of yet more vivid, more tragic interest—at least for those who were in the secret. Mrs. Lanfoot ran up to the group behind Leonard, and cried, almost breathlessly:

"Major Longwood is here! Major Longwood is here!"

"Yes, I've seen him," rejoined Louise Bradbury. "What did you mean by that absurd story that he never came here?"

"But he's playing! he's playing! Come and see! come quick! He's been to the Ad-

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ministration, and given up the ten francs a day they allowed him. He came into another fortune yesterday, and now he's here again gambling it away for dear life."

It was true. The story went from one to another, and people crowded in large numbers to see him. The poor old Major—all his long years of poverty and humiliation forgot, all the simple and genial tastes acquired to fill those years forgotten—was at the *trente-et-quarante* table, playing the very highest stakes, tossing the second fortune, in great handfuls, into the same abyss that had swallowed up the first.

The voices diminished, then ceased. Leonard heard, without turning his head. The piece of news gave him a certain thrill, but the problems before him were far too absorbing to let attention relax. It was a mad day, then; the maelstrom was turning at its wildest whirl. It was appropriate that all the world, even that part of it which had been the most restrained, should throw off its caution and plunge into it with him.

"Oh, for a glorious 'permanence,' as on the day of my great victory!" he sighed, with fire in his veins. "Then I'd show them play. To see the same color returning time after time, against ever-increasing odds, and back it with

ever-increasing stakes. There is a game worthy of one's steel. There is the true and courageous way to fortune.”

But no permanence rewarded his eager sigh of aspiration ; baffling “intermittences” instead frittered away his energy and his funds. There was a little of red and a little of black, a little of red again, and again a little of black ; and he, following on after these changes, was nearly always on the wrong side of them.

The winning of a *maximum*, however, the highest stake, after a while, gave him a brief gleam of cheerfulness. Much encouraged, he was about to play two such stakes at once ; but the croupier took it into his head to stop it. By the letter of the rules, indeed, such play was forbidden, but the rule was not always enforced. Lord Buntrock, for example, who had lately put down *maximums* on every one of the coincident chances, nine of them in all. As luck would have it, Leonard saw that the stake they refused would have won had they left it down. He was very angry, “rattled” he would have called it. It was a bad sign, perhaps a sign of the breaking up and of the beginning of the end ; for the successful gambler should remain imperturbably cool. He got up to change his table and met Louise Bradbury

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coming back from the Major Longwood episode.

"One could calculate just about how long his inheritance will last him," she said.

They had met comparatively little for some time. She had been away to Florence, and but lately returned. She was more prudent, too, of late, and more serious than she had been. Luck at play had gone against her. The legend of the handsome young American girl who had won all her fans, gloves, bonbons and carriages, not to say the hotel-bills of the family, no longer held good. Her mother had reproved her. The young woman awoke to the fact that when she had been playing her part as a spoiled child of fortune, she had allowed herself to set some of the proprieties much too audaciously at defiance. The admiring French captain who had seemed so entirely captive to her bow and spear had gone to other fields and had left behind him the rumor of some ungal-lant remarks as to her freedom of manner, which were going about the clubs and elsewhere with very derogatory effect. She was rather chastened by this, for the moment, and inclined to square her deportment much more nearly than usual to stiffly conventional lines. This latter, however, was for people in general, not with Leonard.



### *"Rien ne va Plus"*

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"We are all going back by the six o'clock train. Won't you come with us?" she said, ingratiatingly.

The question was both offensive and alarming to him, and he refused in that curt way which she let him use with her, but which he would never have used, even with her, had not his mind been so wrought upon and distracted. He was surprised to note with what difficulty his voice came, and his throat was parched and dry.

Yes, they were going back, these idle people, when their day's pleasure was over; they were going back, to dine, to dance, to amuse themselves in their various ways, at Nice. But he—what was he going to do? Would he be quits with the Casino at six, or even at the closing hour, at eleven at night? Brief twinges of misgiving and of dread beset him. What should he do if his fortune were *not* made, if all was yet to be settled? Hum, hum! he must get an instant to think of that.

At a new table Leonard first tried playing "in his head," a bit. He chose his numbers, and watched to see how he would have succeeded had he actually put stakes upon them. He succeeded well this way; but, with a new beginning came new failure. He suddenly re-

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marked that the croupier was Krieg, reputed to give so many *voisins*, the neighboring numbers.

"Why did I not remark that before?" he asked; and fingering his coins with a fevered touch that left them hot as if newly minted, he began to play *voisins*.

As he half stood to place the pieces about the board himself, as he was fond of doing, for to let the croupier place them with his rake seemed but to invite that rake to the more surely sweep them away—he felt his muscles stiffened as with rheumatism. He seemed to have suddenly grown old.

His old favorite, the 19, turned up. Good! He placed *voisins* about that number—three to the right, and three to the left of it. If he won on any of those seven numbers he would be out by his pieces on the other six, but he could well afford this deduction from a gain of thirty-five. The manœuvre being successful, he meant to repeat and continue.

But none of them won. Click! clatter! went the wooden rake, sweeping away his gold into the omnivorous treasury.

The goaded bull of the arena, too oft repulsed in his fierce onset upon his persecutors, stands vacillating, at last, and loses spirit for the combat. Leonard, sick with disappointment, be-

*“Rien ne va Plus”*

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gan to draw near that stage which is marked by the staggering step, the glazing eye, the total collapse of endurance. His head was befogged ; he said to himself that he had probably not come into the contest in good physical condition ; he should have waited for a better moment.

He now took account of stock, passed all his remaining funds in review and made ready for a final effort. The bills being changed into coin, he found piled up beside him something like eleven hundred francs. That is to say, the total of his worldly possessions was perceptibly less than the sum he had lately spent for an extravagant dinner. His theory of high play, partially abandoned perforce, came back to favor again.

“ Play high and leave it to luck ; that is the only way to fortune,” had been his argument. “ As the lucky stroke comes but rarely, with small play you can never arrive at anything.”

He divided his money into seven maxima, of nine gold pieces each, and put them upon the fortunate 19 and its six neighbors. He would fall decorously, if fall he must ; he did it quietly, like a pattern gambler, this time, leaving the authorized assistants to place the stakes.

The shining wheel, on the green cloth, spun

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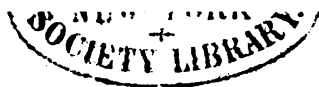
rapidly round to the right; the ivory marble spun rapidly round to the left, and went danc-ing, clicking, clattering amid the compartments as if playing a merry game of leap-frog.

"*Rien ne va plus*," sang croupier Krieg, one of the venerable founder, M. Blanc's, original Swiss or German aids, brought down with him from the original Hombourg.

The marble danced no more, but pursued its gradually diminishing rounds. Would it go on forever; would it never stop? But it did stop. Leonard watched with an eye half-look-ing on, half-averted in dread. The ball stopped in—*un numéro quelconque*, a wholly indifferent number, the designation of which is not of the least importance. The only relevant point is that it was in none of those that Leonard had chosen.

He gazed before him vacantly. Some spec-tators looked at him with a half-amused smile, not knowing, nor caring, how serious it was. What did this mean? It meant that he was to get up and go away, that he had no business there, that others, *real* players, were waiting for his place; there was no room at the board for mere loungers and lookers-on.

But not yet. He bethought him of the five hundred francs he had put away in the envelope



*"Rien ne va Plus"*

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in his inner pocket. He brought it forth feverishly to the light. He had meant to stop absolutely at this point, and consider it as if it did not exist.

"But what an absurd, indefensible resolution," he argued. "Here is another plain duty to be performed. Shall I leave Miriam and the boy penniless while a single chance remains? It would be actually criminal not to use this sum—to bring back all the rest. It is ample. Fate has only let me go down to the last step, and be drained to the last sou, to make her restitution the more startling and complete."

Again he ranged all his cash, and the bystanders, thinking him a person of infinite resource, turned away their attention to others. It really made no difference upon what number he staked: it was now the time for propitious fate to do her part; so he hazarded upon the once lucky 19. The wheel went round, the croupier announced another number, *not* 19, and unconcernedly drew in the winnings of the bank. Leonard's absolute and final all was swept away with the rest.

The rake that took away his money seemed to rake over his vitals, the trembling tissue of his heart.

Up to this final moment he had believed in

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his recovery, believed with unshakable confidence. Gone, gone to the last dollar, to the exhaustion of the last possible resource! gone, gone, and all absolutely beyond repair! Those men sitting so coolly and flippantly there would not give it back to him, his precious gold—no, not if he should weep tears of blood, not if he should writhe in untold agonies of despair.

## CHAPTER VIII.

“AND AS TO YOU, DEATH, IT IS IDLE TO  
TRY TO ALARM ME”

LEONARD BOND felt at first as if he should die on the spot. He held to the edge of the table dizzily even, though seated. Now it was settled; he must in very truth go away: he was cumbering useful space. But before he did that he thought of doing two different things. First, a wild notion came into his head to reach over and seize some handfuls of gold from the dealer's stores and continue the play. Secondly, he fancied himself speaking to them, to all their infamous faces, much in the following way:

“But this is a mere absurdity, do you understand? No consideration is given for these great sums you take away. Persons are not to be stripped of fortunes in this trifling fashion. The existence of a beloved wife and child—of wife and child, do you hear—is not to be destroyed at the spinning of a gimcrack. This is

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not serious ; this is not the business of men ; it is the play of babbling infancy. Away with it ! let us hear no more of it. It is not true. It cannot be ; it shall not be."

He himself was almost surprised that no such words issued from his dry lips. On the contrary, he sat in impassive silence. It could not have been long that he sat there inert, but it seemed very long. Another address meanwhile was creeping sluggishly through his brain.

"Am *I* to go away empty-handed? Am I, forsooth, looked upon as an intruder here? Have I no right at this board, no share any more in its interests, after all these months? Do they mean to tell me that? *Allons donc ! voilà encore des blagues !*"

It seemed to him that he was on the very point of uttering a formless cry of protest, a mad incoherent cry, devoid of reason, of hope, of any use. But the imperious pressure of the atmosphere of "good form" was upon him in his turn. He merely rose, with a prodigious affectation of indifference, to save appearances, and moved back from the table. He remained there a little while, till he thought the bystanders must be thrown off the scent by his nonchalance, and then almost staggered away, like one aged before his time.



“And as to You, Death”

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“What shall I do next?” he reflected. “Surely something remains to be done; *something* is to be done next.” An answer was forming itself in his consciousness, an answer full of dread possibilities. “Shall I go and solicit their pitiful *viaticum*—the sum that takes one a little way out of the territory? But where, then, to go? They shame you by leading you about the rooms from croupier to croupier to see if these know you and recollect your losing the money. They throw doubts upon your ever having had any. They tell you contemptuously they cannot afford to pay the railroad fares of every wretched little loser of a five- or a ten-franc piece. Ah, no, none of the Administration’s *viaticum* for me.”

The answer to his self-tormenting question took shape. It was all very clear. There was but one thing to do—to die. It was not matter for argument but for simple recognition. The world would be well rid of so weak and worthless a character. He must die, because he could not go back again to that world he had left, because he could not go back and face Miriam. Who could tell her not merely that she was bereft of the charming new home on Cap. Ferret, but that she had,

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henceforth, no income, no reserves, no means of existence whatever? Not he, no never! not he who had brought it all upon her!

Louise Bradbury met him, drifting aimlessly along, and was alarmed at the look, the lost expression of his face. She had watched his play only in part, and did not know how serious it was; she thought he was merely changing tables. It was not at all logical in one holding toward him the baneful views we have known her to declare, but she said, laying her hand on his sleeve almost as gently as Miriam might have done,

"You look as if you would not mind gaming away your share of the common air and daylight. If I were you I would not play any more to-day. You ought to stop."

"You have changed your opinion of the amusement, it seems?"

"With my luck, perhaps. I must tell you about it. But believe me," she went on, either feeling or simulating repentance, "when I persuaded you to play, when I influenced you to come, I did not really think you would let it take hold of you so seriously. You do not look well. You ought to rest."

He made her an answer that caused her delicate hand to abandon his sleeve, as if repelled

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by a slow, negative electric current. All her wounded susceptibilities were evinced in that slight gesture of withdrawal. In him, a feeling of surprise at her words had struggled to the surface even from the depths of his tragic preoccupations.

"*You* influenced me! Do not flatter yourself; do not for a moment think so."

His words were significantly cruel, comprehensive, final. He refused to admit her even to a share in his undoing.

Well, it was now four o'clock in the afternoon, and he issued forth into the outer world with no other calling than to arrange for the manner of his death. Four in the afternoon by that one of the twin dials on the Casino towers that indicated the local time, and wanting yet twenty minutes of it by the other, which showed the hour of the sun's arrival at Paris. He could see no gayety now, even of an indifferent sort, in that Casino façade, as he looked up mechanically for the hour. It was savage and Gorgon-like, an edifice of monstrous obliquity, that blasted the lovely face of nature.

Four o'clock was early in the day to be turned out on such an errand. Ruthless destiny might at least have let him complete the full session, that he might bury his overthrow

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under the darkness of midnight. Self-sentenced to death, *how* was he to die? It suddenly came upon him, with a start, that he had no weapon. His thoughts, occupied with dreams of riches, had made no provision for this woful contingency. Perhaps he was going to be balked of his purpose of self-destruction by the bare lack of a weapon! With a certain attempt at a business-like order in his ideas, he went over all the various poor resources that were open to him.

He might dash his head against the wall in the Casino rooms. It seemed, on some accounts, as if it ought to be done there, before them all, as a protest against their infamous practice; he wondered that suicides did not oftener bethink them of it. But it was not certain that it would prove effectual; and the dramatic effect, too, would be best obtained by the short, sharp explosion of a revolver. Again, he might cast himself down from the cliffs at Monaco, but there was no telling that that would be certain either; he might be only wounded on the sharp rocks, and picked up, and nursed back to life again in an hospital. Then, there was the sea; he had thought of that sometimes at Nice, when it was placid and winsome, even when he was happy; as the

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dreamy, speculative idea comes to all of us in our time. But he was a strong swimmer, and perhaps he would be forced to turn back from any attempt to go down in its depths by pure physical repulsion and the failure of will. There remained some loose change in his pocket, and poison was not necessarily dear, but he knew that the garish pharmacy, up at the top of the slope, would not sell him poison without a doctor's prescription. It was probably a place where they were peculiarly on the alert for just such cases as his.

The orchestra had been moved from the music-hall to the outer terrace for the summer season. Leonard wandered, from the main esplanade, down that way, and, deep in his cogitations, passed once or twice around the terrace. The music was concluding the soft strains of "Poet and Peasant." "'Poet and Peasant,' 'Poet and Peasant,'" he idly murmured, and all at once, without the slightest connection of ideas, there popped into his head the memory of a revolver he had seen carelessly lying in a drawer of the desk that belonged to Banfi, at the Café de Paris. He had seen it at the time that the usurer paid him the money for Jojo. Possibly he might secure it without too much difficulty. He betook himself hastily

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to the Café de Paris, but in the room in question were numerous people just now, and Banfi himself was near the desk. No attempt could be made upon the drawer without suspicion.

This hope, then, in its turn proved fallacious, for he could not let himself be thwarted in his plans by being arrested as a petty thief.

The quest for a suitable weapon threatened to become even more engrossing than the purpose for which it was to be used when found, and this enforced practicality was a vestige of saving grace and was beneficial to him. Taking thought in many directions, he called to mind at last an *omnium gatherum* place, in the Condamine, a sort of respectable junk-shop, where he had sometimes unearthed rather good bits of bric-à-brac, and where he was somewhat known in person to the owners. He remembered revolvers among the medley of objects encumbering the windows. Thither he went and entered. He pretended to have forgotten his money for the nonce, induced the proprietor to take his sleeve-buttons—on a promise to redeem them on his next visit from Nice—and received in exchange a revolver and some rounds of ammunition.

Once out of the shop, the idea beset him that, instead of doing that, he should have

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raised another five-franc piece or two, in order to go back and try his fortune anew at the tables. He might yet, as goes the true gamester's belief, to the last, have saved all.

"It's a devil's notion," he said, "which, if I had yielded to it, might have stripped me even of this my last poor refuge and comfort."

But the idea, having once entered his head, would not easily leave it. He turned back to the shop again, after having already gone a considerable distance; there divested himself of his waistcoat and other articles of apparel not absolutely necessary to that decent appearance which is an essential condition of admission to the Casino, and upon these received another five-franc piece. He had now a five-franc piece in his pocket, in addition to the friendly resource of the revolver.

When he re-entered the Casino to play it, he was almost like a disembodied spirit returning to a world with which it has no ties. All those late interests, that burning fever of life, had passed away. He played his new stake indifferently; it was only a sort of duty. He had no real hope in it, and the upshot showed that none was warranted. The coin was swept away without causing a ripple in the current made up of prodigal sums; he breathed hard

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and departed. He was banished forever from the world of the fortunate, from the world of the living. His decree of banishment was signed, sealed, and delivered with all the rigors of a savage and inexorable fate.

He had found the motive and the means to die ; it remained to choose the time and place. But first a word to Miriam. He sat down by a pretty wicker-table, in one of the summer-like wicker-chairs of the corridor of the Grand Hotel, and wrote her a letter.

He told her all he had done since the beginning of this infatuation, and the fatal result. He exposed to her their penniless situation, the decline of his powers for work, and his hopelessness of being able to remould the future. He set forth the dread step upon which he was now resolved, and defended it on specious pleas ; he said that it was the only possible one for himself, the best for her, the best indeed for all of them. In the anguish of these reflections, in the agitation of such a moment, it might easily have happened that he should be obscure in certain parts and forget certain business directions he would otherwise have given.

In a few words full of conviction he dwelt upon his strong love for her and the child, and the bitterness of the pain of parting. " Oh,



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what a tangle, what a wreck I have made of my life!" he went on. "Oh, to clear it all away, and begin anew. I cannot bring myself to believe that this parting of ours is final. Flying in the very face of heaven, as I am, I almost persuade myself that heaven will somehow, somewhere, be more merciful. Are we not all of us children still, all in need of fuller help, of direction, of forbearance? Will not eternal justice afford me yet another chance, and let me bring this utterly balked and defeated nature of mine, which yet had possibilities of good, to the worthier development of which it sometimes seemed capable?"

"You and I have discussed suicide together, Miriam, in that way in which people will speak of it at times. We have argued as to whether it was brave or cowardly, whether it is ever justifiable. Well, I who am about to meet it face to face am not thinking, at this moment, whether it is brave or cowardly, or whether it is justifiable, but only that for me it is inevitable. Given my nature, is any other conclusion possible? You saw of what unfeeling conduct I became capable toward you through partial reverses at play; how then can I count upon myself when all is lost? And if my efforts could not command success in life, even under

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the ordinary conditions, could it be expected, could any betterment for us ever be looked for, following this overwhelming blow, this complete disaster?

“Miriam, darling, these last few months I have not been a rational being; I have been out of my mind. The faults and errors I attributed so freely to you existed only in my imagination; my troubles and difficulties were all of my own making. They say that when one is really deranged he turns his greatest violence against those he most dearly loves. Is not that what I have done with you? Oh, forgive all—even this! forgive! forgive! good-by!”

When he had finished the letter he put it in his pocket. He did not yet mail it. The place of his death, oh, grim decision! was still to be determined. Some indication of it should be given for Miriam's guidance, but that hateful choice his distracted mind for the moment refused to make.

He was most inclined to seek, for the dread act, their new cottage; and in pursuance of this idea he set out swiftly, on foot, for St. Jean. He was without even the money for a railway fare, and must walk, but he had the time, and it was better that he should arrive there at night, even late at night. Under cover of darkness he

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could perfectly well enter the cottage. There was a low platform already built, at the end of his studio, and there were some warm-colored draperies and other properties about that could be used with good effect. He would aim to make a sort of picture of the tragedy.

Being a picture, even a gloomy one, he thought, with characteristic bias, that part of the horror of the scene, on discovery, would be taken away. He meant to fall, like another Cæsar, by Pompey's statue, with his mantle drawn decorously over him. Yes, it was thus, at last, he would take possession of the charming house he had planned. Yes, he would be found its first occupant. When the workmen chattering their careless Provençale patois came back to continue their daily labors they would find him, its rightful tenant, lying there within.

But Miriam would see him ; no mantle could hide his face from her. His heart misgave him at the thought of that dear child's affright and lamentable woe. If anything could have shaken his resolution it was this difficulty of disposing of his mortal remains. His pity and his æsthetic taste both revolted against it. Oh, the bad taste, the repulsiveness, of that last dread exhibition ! Oh, the weakness of poor mortality

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that must so absolutely abandon its helpless clay to the disposal of others !

No, he would not go to St. Jean. As he reached the little station of La Turbie the idea that had led him thus far became unendurable to him.

“ I will not blast the sight of poor Miriam with a horrid spectacle,” he soliloquized. “ She shall never recall me lying before her disfigured and in a dishonorable death. My body need not be found at all. I will disappear from the world of the living and remain only a vision and a memory. She must think of me only as I was when at my best, or as when she saw me last.”

He had called to mind the small caves in the pine wood, along the mountain foot-path, by which he and Miriam had descended, on their first trip to Monte Carlo. One of those might do ; there he could disappear almost absolutely ; at least he would hardly be discovered till Miriam had left the country to rejoin her relatives, and the blow would be softened by time and distance. He had already set foot on the rude *sentier*, the foot-path, to climb, when he was called back by a new reflection.

“ No,” he said, “ Miriam must *know* that I am dead. It would be only a new injustice to

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her to leave it in any doubt. The legal identifications must be made. It might be thought, otherwise, that I was still alive. It is a sad necessity, but—here at least she will not come in person ; some conventional preparations will first have been made."

So he added the final words to his letter, and posted it at the station of La Turbie. The town itself, with the Roman tower of Augustus, was a good hour's climb, up on the lofty level of the Corniche Road, under the yet bolder steep of Mont Agel, scarred with the works of its modern fortress. The trail was a mere adaptation of an old Roman mule-path. Oddly enough, it was so faint below as to be scarcely distinguishable, but after a little distance it widened out into something of a road. It was as if the inhabitants above were wont to come down only to a certain point—and why they came down to that certain point remained in inscrutable mystery—and then to turn and go home again. A donkey-path paved with rude cobblestones stopped abruptly at that place and vanished into the ground, just as it was in the mind of Leonard to do at some favorable point along its course.

He broke off almost an armful of pink roses from the last rural property he met with and

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took them with him. The house was shut up, and these roses tumbled over the wall in a riot of color and fragrance. He loved the beautiful to the very marrow of his bones ; he meant that the charm of this beauty should be with him at the end, and perchance it would serve as his mute appeal against being cut off from his birthright in the everlasting realm of beauty forever.

It must be confessed that he talked aloud to himself as he went on, in the strange quest for a place for his own death and burial. He summed up in detail all the wrong he thought life had done him from his earliest years. He did not cast the blame of his fate upon Monte Carlo ; he scorned to plead what he would have called "the baby-act ;" no, the fault was his own ; he should have been strong enough to withstand the contemptible temptation. He recalled in a whimsical way the young American girl from Cannes, her joking suggestions that he should commit suicide for her entertainment. Alas ! if she could but see him now !

A narrow ravine, the bed of a dry brook, first attracted him as a site for his purpose. Again, and still more, a little hollow in a knoll with a cluster of great stones and a fine live-oak spreading its broad shade over it. He remem-

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bered this of old, a pleasant nook where he and Miriam, on their walk, had stopped to rest. The air was sweet with the fragrance of wild thyme and resinous pine; the glimpse of the sea across the edge of the cup-like hollow was delicious. The spirit might delight in these things to the very last moment of its flight. The great stones were like a Druid's circle and constituted already a dignified monument.

But, climbing thither, for it was above the path, Leonard found other people already in possession. He surprised a group ensconced within, playing upon a portable table at surreptitious roulette for petty stakes. They were in part peasants, in part victims of the devouring Moloch below, whose humble means did not allow them to worship at the greater shrine. Strolling dealers gave them these rendezvous in the woods, and they gratified as best they could with sous the passion which could no longer muster francs. Such play was subject to severe penalties in all the country, and the members of this exemplary coterie, seeing the intruder, feared to be denounced, and catching up their outfit, bolted precipitately in all directions. Thus the very ground was full of it; it appeared that the same villainous note was to sound in Leonard's ears to the end of his days.

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Critical in his search, he climbed far up the foot-path. Some of the caves were too small, many were inconvenient, some were occupied to store the fagots of the wood-cutters. He found one at last to his liking, and entered. There were some few pine boughs in the bottom of it, left by those wood-cutters, but it had a deserted air. It was below the surface, dry, a veritable nest or pocket it descended some three feet below the surface, and he could stand upright in it. Here was the end of the journey; here was to be the last resting-place of Leonard Bond, whose heart had once beat so high with hope, the mausoleum of that Leonard Bond who had believed himself capable of all fine and glorious things.

Twilight drew on while he was making his preparations, and then the dark night came. He had made a slight barrier of branches across the front of the cavern to create a species of privacy, and also as a certain indication to the searchers when they should come to look for him. He felt cold, in his light clothing, and he was overcome with fatigue—but could such ills be of any moment to a man in his situation? He made up a bed of the boughs and then drew a part of them over him for a sort of coverlid. There was something almost warm and



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friendly in the idea of dying there. Miriam had once spoken of sleeping in such a cave, perhaps that very one, if they were lost—Oh, how lost, how fatally lost he was now! Her image would be with him in his last sleep.

He put the roses near to his bewildered head, and their rare perfume overcame that of the pine. He placed the cold muzzle of the pistol against his temple, then against his heart. There were questions to be studied out, even in this supreme moment of mental distress. Problems of his physical anatomy, contingencies of failure, came up. Should the ball, in the one case, be deflected by the temporal bone, or should it strike against one of the ribs, instead of passing between, what then? Might he not perhaps only wound himself, and lie there disabled and without capacity to fire again?

In the midst of this it suddenly occurred to him that, in his letter to Miriam, he had forgotten something. Certain things were clearer to him now. There were directions to give about the building-lots in America, the last poor fragment of his possessions, which it would be criminal to neglect; without these points she might not even get them for her own. There were some figures in his private memorandum-book to be consulted, and he must

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write the note to her upon a leaf torn from this book, and attach it upon his coat clearly in sight so as to be found with his body. But he realized that this purpose was futile. He had no means of making a light, and he could not consult his memoranda nor write a note, in the thick darkness of the cavern and of the forest. He must await, perforce, the break of day.

No fear that his resolution might weaken. One may live through the night, which is a muffling species of death already, but with the coming on of the morning light, the new day, then he knew that his depression would be its heaviest, and the resolve to end himself would take on its sternest energy.

So he lay upon his rude bed of branches, waiting. At moments he would pity himself, and again shrink back from death with a repugnance beyond words; but a calm, inexorable logic always brought him back anew to the initial point. "Nothing within me has become more promising, I suppose, and nothing without more lenient, because I am sorry for my lot," he said, with self-mocking irony; "nothing in the relentless situation has improved merely because I do not wish to die."

He thought how if the cavern should close

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over him by some convulsion of nature, and his body be never recovered. Perhaps, his whitened bones might be found ages after, and give rise to learned theories like those concerning the prehistoric men in the caves at Mentone. He saw his death going the rounds as a little paragraph in the foreign papers ; then a somewhat larger one in the papers at home. Some of the latter would contain a brief mention of his work and his scanty fame. Then friends would arise to say that his death was the result of accident, not suicide—they always did that. Finally, they would charitably put it down as due to temporary aberration of mind, the consequence of illness.

But he determined to think of pleasanter things, to devote his last moments on earth to the memory of Miriam. He reviewed the whole course of their acquaintance from the beginning. It was but an every-day, quite an earthly beginning. He had met her at some pleasant house in Dresden, where they gave afternoon tea. Her relatives were in Dresden, and she had lived much abroad. She had, then, been long in mourning for her mother, and her black dress and a bunch of violets at the breast gave a touch of pensiveness to her sweet face, her youthful yet charmingly rounded figure.

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With what sympathy, what respect, what ardor, he had followed her every movement. His eyes had been ever caressingly drawn by an involuntary attraction. He thought she did not see this, but she admitted to him, later, she had known it all from the first. His longing for so delicious a companionship had grown imperious, irresistible and—he had won her.

. . . . .

He slept. He dreamed that Miriam and the child had already gone before him to that strange eternity, whatever it may be, and were waiting for him. But there was nothing formidable or strange about it all; it was like our own dear world when it is at its best, happy and beautiful. It was only as if he had returned from some little journey to town, and, in their pretty muslin attire and leghorn hats, such as they were wont to wear, came down a sunny path of heaven to meet him, cried joyously, from a distance, "Papa has come! Here's papa! here's papa!"

Ah! and the awakening then! He awoke as the condemned do, on the morning of their execution. Though only self-condemned, his sentence was not the less immutable. The new day, when all that one dreads is about to begin again, when all that one longs for in vain

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is shown in its fairest colors, that is the time when the distracted soul is the most confirmed in its desperate purposes.

The light was obscure in his rocky retreat, and he had slept much later than he had supposed. He was never to go forth from that cavern and he had not to concern himself about any scrupulous toilet now. He merely pushed away a part of the branches he had set up as a screen, in order to let the light come full upon the paper on which he was about to write. He stopped an instant to look out. The morning was beautiful in the wood, beautiful with the loveliness of inanimate nature. And yet how heartless it often seems to the human woes that turn to it for redress and consolation. Yes, here he was to end; the face of nature indifferently smiling upon him only fortified his purpose. He saw again that his weapon was in order. He could already forecast in fancy the dire crash of the bullet into the vital tissue, the flashing sparks and meteors, the inrush of black chaos that were to be the last sensations of human life.

But first he drew out the memorandum-book to write the letter. It was the one he had saved in the nick of time from the hands of little son, when the latter was about to throw it from

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the terrace. He found his pencil, and opened the book ready to consult his notes.

His amazed eyes filled with tenderness, his over-burdened heart beat with a great and sudden throb, at what he saw. Briefly as his interfering little boy had had the book in his possession, he had made some notable changes; he had left upon it his irrepressible baby charm, the memory of his captivating arts. The central leaves bore the imprint of little finger-tips, and between the pages those fingers had thrust a choice collection of the whimsical odds and ends they had been playing with that day.

There were disclosed to view some scraps of dried geranium-leaf, a blue pansy, and a bit of flowering cytissus. The last seemed to Leonard a heaven-sent sign, carrying his mind back on the instant to the little town, Roquebrune, above Monte Carlo, which they said this plant had checked in its descent. Idle the legend might be, trivial enough the coincidence, but, at this moment, they seemed vital with meaning, scarcely less than a direct interposition of Providence. The diminutive sprig of cytissus, holding some coign of vantage, had formed the first nucleus of resistance, loose earth had banked against it, then stones, then uprooted trees; then great boulders had added their mass till

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at length an unyielding barrier was created, and the fatal land-slide was stopped. So, too, was it with him: he was reprieved, he was rescued.

"I will live," he cried. "Lucien has saved me. Blessings upon his dear little baby heart! his innocent baby flowers! See, I am strong again, I am free of it; this baleful impulse holds me no longer."

Had there been anything conscious, any least trace of design, in the appeal, even had it come from Miriam, the revulsion of feeling might not have been so strong. But, oh, the sweet naïveté, the touching naturalness of the childish tokens! Vistas of ineffable charm opened back upon the joys of his domestic life! Duty, too, and the future, opened before him glorified! Remorse was followed by clearer vision, a nobler philosophy, by sane reasoning, manly resolves. What had been in the past it was too late to undo—it all took on the aspect of a hideous dream of selfishness—but as to what remained for the future,

"I put aside all false pride and shame," cried he. "In whatever conditions my lot may now be cast, under whatever hardship or poor appearance, I can still find something to do for Miriam and the boy. To them I belong and not to the idle grave. They have a right to all

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that yet remains to me of strength and will to labor."

He tossed the pistol away into the depths of the cave, joyously pulled down the barrier of branches, and rapturously kissing the mementoes of little son, sallied forth. The thought of the letter he had sent Miriam gave him sudden pause, but for a moment, only. Mailed the afternoon before, it must have been received by this time. His heart bled for her as well as for himself. If he could but call it back! He was to go to Miriam's side; he was to be humiliated in her eyes. But this bitterness, too, he would bear, as a part of his punishment. "It shall not weaken my purpose. I will live to be an instrument of use in an humble way," he declared, resolutely, knowing full well that his mere determination to live by no means renewed a pleasant life before him.

He was not far from the top of the pass, and he climbed the rest of the way rapidly. Some red-trousered soldiers, off duty from the fort high above, were dancing with one another, at the inn at La Turbie, for lack of better partners. Leonard was in no condition for a forced march; but, when he thought of Miriam's probable pains at the moment, he wanted to annihilate time and space, and he forced himself



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along the Corniche Road at a prodigious rate. Now and again there were enveloping wreaths of mountain mist, and he seemed to journey almost in the clouds. He passed above Eze, fitting scene for the wildest exploits of mediæval romance. He looked down, to the left hand, upon the sea, the map-like capes and promontories, then westward to the distant castle on his own hilltop, to distant red-roofed Nice and the foamy Var—all the dream-like, the far-spreading prospect that he and Miriam had learned to know so well.

By eleven o'clock he was at the Quatre Chemins. He turned at the inn, with the quaint sign-board, there, where Massena once won a famous victory, took the ancient cobble-paved foot-way, and descended rapidly into his own village of Villefranche.

He met some persons he knew, near the entrance of the village, others, again, in the Place de la Paix, but there was nothing significant in their mien. None of them gave any signs of agitation concerning him. They had apparently not heard that he was dead, or had meant to die. So, then, the news had not yet got out. Should he find Miriam alone prostrated with its horror? should he not rather find her flown despairingly to Nice, to consult the

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Consul or other friends about it, and determine what was to be done about the search for the body? Prospect of a new overwhelming humiliation, which he had not thought of before. If Miriam disclosed it, as she necessarily would and must, how infinitely difficult to face a world which knew all he had meant to do, even if he had not done it! It was almost enough to drive him back again.

Oppressed by the most painful misgivings he paused a moment at that focus of the village activity where stood the blacksmith shop and the Buvette of the Four Seasons over against the Octroi. The Buvette catered to English as well as native custom, artfully offering "Wisky, Old Tom Gin, Laid Eggs and English Spoken." The little postmaster and his wife, lately retired upon their pension, after thirty years in office down in the dark and dingy Rue Droite, were sunning themselves in the edge of the Place d'Armes. They had nothing to do now, this honest couple, but sun themselves, and they set one foot before another with extreme deliberation, as if they wished to accentuate to the utmost the luxury of their leisure. The sight of them reminded Leonard of the late changes in the post-office, and a faint glimmer of hope arose upon his horizon.

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Far on ahead he discerned a figure resembling that of Maurel, the postman. He gave chase. It *was* Maurel, toiling along on his little bowed legs as usual, his satchel of letters over one shoulder and a package of newspapers in his hand. Leonard came up with him precisely as he turned in at the smaller gate of the Villa Soleil. He faced about on hearing the quick step and hurried breathing of Leonard, touched his glazed visor and, with his polite and chronic smile,

"*Justement* a letter for Madame and a journal for Monsieur—but I'll take them up if Monsieur is not going directly to the house."

"Your second delivery, of course?" queried Leonard, with his heart in his mouth. He affected a nonchalant tone, but dared not yet stretch out his hand to take the missive offered him.

"No," began the postman apologetically, "no, unfortunately, it's only the first for today. Those new fellows down there in the post-office don't even yet understand their business. Between ourselves, some of them are such ignoramuses as I would never have believed could exist. For instance, they let all the mail from the eastward go on to Nice last night, and had to get it back this morning.

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It will be a lesson to 'em ; they won't do that again. And who knows ? they may get things straight after a time."

Oh, blessed *r  lief* ! Leonard took the correspondence with alacrity now. He saw his own handwriting, upon the letter he had mailed to Miriam from La Turbie station. He had outstripped it. He tore it up and scattered the fragments to the winds. Not even Miriam, now, should ever know of his projected suicide. The rest, yes, the gambling, the ruin, since she needs must, but his purpose of self-destruction never. For both their sakes, that secret should be forever confined to his own breast.

When he had gone about half way up the shady grounds, there were Miriam and little Lucien coming down to meet him.

"We saw the postman with you at our gate," cried Miriam. "Was there anything ?"

Leonard held up the journal, to indicate that that was all.

"And, bad boy ! where have you been ?" she began, as she joined him. "Has it got so that you can't send a telegram when you're to be away over night ?"

But something in his face checked her. She suddenly broke off, and set to dancing

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gracefully around him with Lucien, crying joyfully, as in his dream,

"Here's papa! here's papa!"

"And play wi'! play wi'!" shouted Lucien.

Leonard hindered their dancing, managed to take them both in his arms at once, embraced them with a greater and more passionate tenderness than they had ever before known from him. Under the intense strain of emotion that had been put upon him, his voice quivered in a half sob of heart-break.

"Oh, Miriam!" he cried, "Oh, Miriam! Miriam! I have you still, my loved one. Oh, my wife! Oh, my child! Darlings! darlings! You are mine. I have a home. I live, I live."

The imminent blight of destruction was past, the cold touch of death had gone by and had not descended upon him, the chill grave had not claimed him for its own. Instead, the warm caresses of affection were his, and before and around him were the peaceful prospect, the flood of sunshine, the flowers, the scene of charming rural comfort. Here he could repose a little while, here he could at least collect his all but demented faculties.

Miriam divined that something terrible had happened, but with a true-hearted woman's quick tact and sympathy she affected to ignore

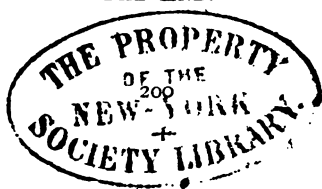
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it. She endeavored to lead away from and make light of it, whatever it might be, feeling that it was best that it should not be entered upon at once.

Leonard put his arm about her, she laid her head against his shoulder, and, while the little child, now on the one side, now on the other, interwove their fingers together, or sported about them, like one of the loves that accompany the graces, they slowly climbed the path together. Their farmer was pruning the rose-bushes; dark, gypsy Barbara, with a gleaming sickle like Diana's crescent moon, was nonchalantly cutting some wisps of tender grass, to feed to Lucien's rabbits. On the terrace before the house was that row\* of orange-trees which Leonard had set out with his own hand, and which, until his late distraction he had been accustomed to carefully study day by day. As they drew near, he noticed that there were many newly opened blossoms upon them, and these blossoms sent him a breath of their most delicious fragrance.

THE END.



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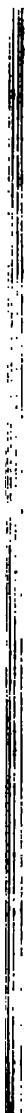
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